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**GOVERNANCE, COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND
URBAN REGENERATION:**

A NEW ROLE FOR THIRD SECTOR PARTNERS?

A thesis submitted to Middlesex University in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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September 2008

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Abstract

Partnership and participation are terms at the centre of current urban regeneration policy initiatives in the UK. The modernising local government agenda has seen a significant shift towards placing greater emphasis on the role of partnerships, and voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) (often referred to collectively as the third sector) are recognised as a key partner in this process. This research conceptualises the third sector within local governance by examining partnership working as a form of community governance. This involves exposing the power relations that underpin such a form of governance in the context of recent urban regeneration initiatives. The research examines two case studies of on-going exercises in community participation within Local Strategic Partnerships in London, the Haringey Community Empowerment Network and the Enfield Community Empowerment Network, in order to interpret how attempts to incorporate the VCO sector in urban regeneration policy in these two areas has unfolded. Through analysis of the policy implementation process as seen in the experience and judgements of key VCO actors involved, what is discovered is that VCOs are embedded in the process and exercise influence, but this influence is “selective” and “focussed”, exerted at different levels in the structures and impacted upon by the capacities of VCOs. Findings also demonstrate that not all VCOs wish to be actively engaged in the same way and that new roles in service delivery for VCOs create operational difficulties for the sector. Local conditions relating to socio-economic factors and local political subcultures play an important role in determining outcomes, which are in fact highly differentiated in the two adjacent areas. Local political conditions are seen to relate to ongoing “discourses” of local governance in terms of “agonistic” and “good bureaucracy” debates as well as theories of power.

Key words: Voluntary and Community Sector; Third Sector; Partnership; Participation; Urban Regeneration; Local Political Subculture

Abbreviations

ABI: Area Based Initiatives
BME: Black and Minority Ethnic
BBT: Bringing Britain Together
CEEDR: Centre of Enterprise and Economic Research
CAF: Charities Aid Foundation
CDP: Community Development Projects
CCP: Comprehensive Community Programmes
CEF: Community Empowerment Fund
CEN: Community Empowerment Network
CPP: Community Participation Programme
CVS: Council of Voluntary Services
DETR: Department of Environment Transport and Regions
DOE: Department of Environment
ERS: Electoral Reform Service
ECARE: Enfield Community Awareness Raising and Empowerment
ECEN: Enfield Community Empowerment Network
ESP: Enfield Strategic Partnership
GOL: Government Office for London
GORs: Government Office for Regions
HAVCO: Haringey Association of Voluntary and Community Organisations
HarCEN: Haringey Community Empowerment Network
HSP: Haringey Strategic Partnership
HRAG: Haringey Refugee Action Group
HO: Home Office
ILD: Index of Local Deprivation
LO: Lead Organisation
LAA: Local Area Agreements
LBE: London Borough of Enfield
LBH: London Borough of Haringey
LGA: Local Government Agenda
LLLC: Local Leadership Local Choice
LDDC: London Docklands Development Corporation
LCPN: London Community Participation Network
LPSA: Local Public Service Agreements
LDA: London Development Agency
LSP: Local Strategic Partnership
MLG: Modern Local Government
NAO: National Audit Office
NDC: New Deal for Communities
NRF: Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
NSNR: National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal
PLCRC: Pan London Community Regeneration Consortium
PMF: Public Management Framework
RDA: Regional Development Agency
REC: Racial Equality Council
SLA: Service Level Agreements
SME: Small- Medium Enterprises
SRB: Single Regeneration Budget
TEC: Training and Enterprise Councils
UDC: Urban Development Corporations
VAH: Voluntary Action Haringey
VCS: Voluntary and Community Sector
VCO: Voluntary and Community Organisation

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CHAPTER 1

GOVERNANCE, COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND URBAN REGENERATION: A NEW ROLE FOR THIRD SECTOR PARTNERS?

1. CONTEXT

"Participation has become an act of faith in development, something we believe in and rarely question. This act of faith is based on three main tenets: that participation is intrinsically a "good thing" (especially for the participants); that a focus on getting the techniques right is the principal way of ensuring the success of such approaches; and that considerations of power and politics on the whole should be avoided as divisive and obstructive."
Cleaver (2001) p36.

1.1 Growth of Partnerships and Networks in Local Governance

The growth in "partnerships" and "networks" between the public, private, voluntary and community sectors in urban regeneration and other areas of policy is one example of the emergence of a new system of collaboration, usually described as "local governance." This process of collaboration both creates and reflects the changing relationships between the state, the market and civil society. This has led to an increasing interest in voluntary and community sector organisations (VCOs) as an alternative arena for civic and social participation. This research aims to examine partnership working as a form of community governance. This means exposing the power relations that underpin such a form of governance in the place/ context of urban regeneration initiatives in London. (Geddes, 1997, Leach & Percy-Smith, 2001, Southern, 2002, Pierre, 1998)

"Partnership" and "participation" are terms at the centre of current UK urban regeneration policy initiatives. Across the 1990s public policy saw a significant shift towards placing greater emphasis on the role of partnerships and key partners recognised in this process are that of the "voluntary and "community" sectors." An emphasis on voluntary and community sector (VCS) involvement is evident within a range of government policies including, the latter rounds of the Single Regeneration Budget, the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, and the New Deal for Communities and the Local Strategic Partnerships. (Mayo, 1997, Burns & Taylor, 2000, Duffy & Hutchinson, 1997, Bailey *et al*, 1995, Carley *et al*, 2000).

In recent years local authorities in the UK have been forced via the Modernising Local Government White Paper (1998) to make use of innovative forms of participation, many of which originate from outside of the UK. These participatory methods include citizens' panels, citizens' juries, visioning exercises, community/ neighbourhood interest forums or networks and community elections. Typically, what motivates local authorities to utilise such techniques is the need to engage with citizens more fully in order to improve responsiveness and develop better quality services (Smith & Wales, 1999, Smith & Wales, 2000, New Economics Foundation, 1998, Leach & Percy-Smith, 2001, Morphet, 2008).

Despite the increasing emphasis placed upon the importance of third sector involvement within urban regeneration there remains limited evidence of this happening effectively in practice. In reality, there are considerable barriers that prevent the effective involvement of third sector partners in partnership working. The participation of third sector partners can be limited by their relationships with more powerful local partners as well as by their internal capacities, whilst it can be difficult to represent effectively highly diverse communities of interest within a locality. It is therefore timely to examine critically the enduring gaps between practice and policy prescriptions and attempt to identify the required necessary and sufficient conditions to enable effective community participation within urban regeneration initiatives, and the conditions that shape particular local outcomes (Mayo, 1997, Atkinson & Cope, 1997, Taylor, 2000, McArthur, 1995, Osborne, 1998, Anastacio *et al*, 2000, Raco & Flint, 2001).

Consequently, the current policy stance raises some important questions: Do the new forms of governance typified by regeneration partnerships present opportunities for inclusivity as well as barriers to inclusion for third sector partners? Within the current wave of policy can VCS partners assume a role as equal partners, or can they at least alter the balance of power within the local policy making/delivery community? Can the structural problems that have prevented effective participation in the past be overcome via capacity building and devolution measures? Furthermore, what issues are raised by placing third sector partners more centrally within partnership working, with regard to the process by which such partners are chosen and their representativeness and accountability vis-à-vis diverse community interests?

The literature that is relevant to this research spans across three academic fields: human geography, social policy and political studies. This research focuses on a range of theoretical debates and demonstrates how these theoretical debates and concepts inter-link with each other, to develop a new conceptual framework (see Chapter 2). These theoretical debates include the shift from local government to networked governance and the controversies which surround this, such as the changing role of the state, the direction of power, the models of local democracy, and the level of representation and accountability. It also includes theoretical debates about the nature and extent of power relationships such as "modes of power," Lukes (1974) "three dimensions of power," Foucauldian and Weberian approaches to power, and Urban Regime Theory.

1.2 New Localism

In the post war period of 1945-1970 (what is often termed the Keynesian Welfare State period) the national economic space was the key territorial unit responsible for economic management, welfare policy and redistribution at the national scale. However, increasingly globalisation has decentred national economic space and led to a loss of economic sovereignty. In this global economy, governance is increasingly multi-layered with the nation state just one form of power in a decentred system. Power has become diffused and uncentred through a multiplicity of global arrangements, which include both "upward" supranational activities and "downward" regional devolution and bottom- up regional or local regeneration (Amin et al, 2003, Jessop, 1994). This disenchantment with the "centre" is at the root of what Stewart (1994) terms the New Localism, and which is the starting point for this thesis.

New Localism is a principle and a philosophy of decentralisation (both managerially and politically). It has also become an umbrella term for many of New Labour's Modernisation policies (Coaffee & Johnston, 2004). It is characterised as being about devolving power and resources away from central control and towards front- line managers, local democratic structures and local communities, which is based on a sort of earned autonomy, supposedly empowering localities and regions and bringing the ability to make decisions closer to the people at the neighbourhood level (Morphet, 2008). New Localism is about creating a greater sensitivity to local circumstances and

more local involvement in decision making to ensure some ownership of the agenda is felt by those attempting to deliver it, rather than it being felt as entirely imposed by external bureaucrats. Diamond (2004) identifies five distinct features of the New Localism model (see Box 1.1)

Box 1.1: Features of New Localism

Source: Diamond (2004)

1. An explicit promotion of area/ neighbourhood based public services
2. Collaboration across public agencies to ensure improved co-ordination and delivery of services
3. Flexibility on the structures to be adopted
4. Use of partnerships to promote co-ordination and prioritisation of resources
5. Explicit use of differing legal structures to transfer responsibility from local government to quasi- stand alone agencies

In the New Localism model, the role of local government is focussed around its community leadership role, which involves facilitating the achievement of community objectives rather than a direct service provider role (Morphet, 2008). This is because, according to proponents, " today it is simply not possible either to run economic policy or deliver strong public services that meet public expectations using old, top- down, one size fits all solutions." (Balls, 2002 cited in Corry et al, 2004) This does not imply that the centre is now redundant. Instead it is about rethinking the relationship between local bodies and the central state (e.g. sub national tiers of government).

Supporters of New Localism advocate that more decisions about public services and solutions to problems of communities should be taken at a local level because at present decision making structures centralise too much power in Whitehall, failing to deliver high quality services and communities that are strong in themselves. Local power and control is also needed because there are no real reasons for saying each locality must have exactly the same set of objectives (Morphet, 2008). New Localism is also thought to enhance trust, social capital and active citizenship because people feel that they can make a difference at the local level. As government minister Hazel Blears states (2003) "if New Localism is to be anything more than the latest political buzz-phrase, it must mean passing real power to local communities."

Behind New Labour's thinking there is a partly hidden but vital vision of a different form of governance, that according to Corry et al (2002: p8) "relies less on central thumbs to push through key policies and more on local fingers to deliver policy designed to reflect local need." However, such a vision is yet to have a major impact upon the policy stage

(see Chapter 4). What we have in effect is a more “subtle centralism” or “steering localism,” where “the thrust has moved towards local activity, but the centre still has a large hand above the tiller” setting the goals or targets (Corry et al, 2002 p8). Also because these quasi bodies have no direct democratic accountability the degree to which they can be allowed to determine their own priorities or be freed from ring fencing is limited.

1.3 Rationale

This new political context raises a number of questions, especially as policy has moved into a phase of implementation, which involves conceptual/ theoretical questions relating to participation and the role of the VCS, as well as practical ones.

Good governance is based in part, on clear links and communication routes between the governed and those taking decisions on their behalf. There are a number of ways in which these mechanisms for dialogue can be encouraged. These range from ensuring that the governing bodies are representative of their constituencies, to the establishment of a variety of participatory mechanisms outside of the formal structures, what may be termed an infrastructure for participation. However, for this to be achieved decision-making must be informed by the experience, views and aspirations of all community stakeholders. In reality, it is commonly known that some voices are heard above others, through a complex and somewhat invisible mix of factors. In practice, the mechanisms of power, the dynamics of influence and the perpetuation of the “status quo” are more difficult to unravel and have therefore, until now been under-explored in the literature. Consequently, the ultimate goal of this study is driven by my political passion to explore and elucidate the situation that currently exists in this new wave of local governance, in particular in the policy field of urban regeneration in which I have a long-standing interest. Must the unequal balance of power between statutory organisations and the third sector in urban regeneration and local government decision-making be accepted, without question? How are the new infrastructures and processes for encouraging participation working in practice, in specific local settings, and how can different local outcomes be understood?

1.4 Research Aims

The research aims of this thesis are:

1. To explore theoretical approaches relating to local governance and community participation within processes of urban regeneration.
2. To analyse the changing policy agenda and assess the extent to which the involvement of third sector partners is a central objective.
3. To review experiences of third sector involvement within urban regeneration and identify themes and examples of practice
4. To analyse community participation mechanisms within the North London sub region, to ascertain the extent and bases for current levels of community involvement, identify the processes developing/ hindering community involvement, and explain (theorise) differences in local outcomes.
5. To consider future research and policy directions for more effective community and voluntary sector participation within partnership working.

1.5 Research Questions and Methodology

In light of these objectives, the thesis seeks to address the following research questions:

1. How is the third sector conceptualised in local governance?
2. What is the nature and extent of voluntary and community sector participation in urban regeneration policy?
 - (a) How and why has voluntary and community sector participation evolved in the urban regeneration arena?
 - (b) What are the contrasting discourses (and definitions) of the "voluntary and community sector," and "community involvement" that underpins urban policy?

- (c) What are the intellectual and practical contradictions of the emerging urban policy framework?
3. With reference to the Community Empowerment Networks (CENs) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in Enfield and Haringey:
 - (a) How is the strategic infrastructure of the CENs created and established?
 - (b) How are agendas and priorities of the community set and how much influence do VCOs have in this process?
 - (c) Who “actively” participates in CENs and who does not and why?
 - (d) Does the competence/ capabilities of community representatives contribute to their level of power in the decision making process?
 - (e) How do VCOs see their new roles in service delivery developing and what are the dangers?
 4. With reference to the Community Empowerment Networks (CENs) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in Enfield and Haringey:
 - (a) How do local conditions (local political subcultures) influence and affect the evolution of CENs?
 - (b) How do these local political conditions relate to ongoing “discourses” of local governance/ politics (agonistic debate) and to theories of how power is exercised?

The research will review relevant theoretical, policy and empirical material related to these issues. The central empirical focus is an in-depth, comparative case study analysis of a particular community participation mechanism: the operation of Community Empowerment Networks and Local Strategic Partnerships in Enfield and Haringey. This research adopts a multi- method approach combining a review of policy documents, participant observation of public meetings, questionnaire on the Community Empowerment Networks and semi structured interviews with key stakeholders involved in the community participation process. The research questions of this thesis are answered using a five stage methodological process, which progressively moves towards deeper and more nuanced understanding of the questions driving the thesis (see Chapter 3).

1.6. The Third Sector: Definitions and Key Concepts

1.6.1 The Third Sector

Defining the third sector or the voluntary and community sectors is fraught with difficulties. This is because the terms themselves are vague to suit the sector's non-static nature. For example, in Westall (2000) the third sector is used in reference to any organisation that does not have profit as its primary motive. In this context third sector organisations may be non-profit (of which charities are a subset) or they may be seeking to make surpluses, but uses them for social goals (i.e. social enterprises which are often seen as hybrid organisations that trade in market in order to fulfil social aims). Rifkin (1995) sees the third sector/ civil sector as the sector that creates social capital. This creates another conceptual dilemma of what is meant by the notion of social capital? (See Evans, 2002, Woolcock, 1998 and Kay, 2003) In contrast, academics writing about the social economy such as Evans (2002), Amin et al (1999) and Pearce (2003) divide the third sector in terms of economic activities that are informal and in the "shadows" and activities that are formal and more apparent, as Figure 1.1 illustrates.

Figure 1.1: The Third Sector and Community Economy
Source: Evans (2002) p35-36



The increasingly high profile that has been given to the third sector in the political arena in recent years can be attributed to four main factors. Firstly, the privatisation of public services that was rooted in the market-based philosophies of the Conservative

government (1979-1991), which have continued under the “third way” of the Blair government, has created and “forced” new spaces for the third sector to move into. A shift can now be identified from state responsibility for welfare to a mixed economy or pluralist welfare system. The explicit rationale behind this is that the market is more efficient than the state. A combination of this approach and the pluralist provision of services has led to a reduction in state responsibility and therefore, an increase in what is expected from both the private sector and voluntary sector organisations (Reading, 1994, Leadbeater, 1997, Williams, 2002).

Secondly, falling electoral turn- outs, disengagement of citizens with the political process and falling stocks of “social capital,” have caused those that support the “third way” agenda to believe the third sector can revitalise civil society and local democracy. There is a widespread political desire to extend the principles and practice of democracy to the regeneration arena, giving the third sector economy a major role to play, through providing the disadvantaged with a voice and a stake in the political process. Consequently, in response to the failure of the “trickle down” approach to regeneration, community and local economic development initiatives have emerged, where the value of the third sector is beginning to be recognised.

Thirdly, flagship regeneration projects, such as the Urban Development Corporations, have been extensively criticised for their failure to engage with, and ensure benefit to, local communities. Consequently, the failure of past regeneration approaches and policies, which did not engage with communities, have led to the adoption of more innovative participatory mechanisms (Leadbeater, 1997, Cooper, 1999a, Sullivan, 2003).

A final reason for the high profile that has been assigned to the third sector is perhaps a more practical one: some claim that the third sector can be effective, flexible and provides close to ground delivery and value for money. The third sector is seen as more effective because it values profitability in a different way from commercial developers, putting people and community benefits alongside or above financial ones. For example, in terms of achieving broad sustainability objectives the redefinition of profitability is often cited as an important milestone enabling environmental and social benefits to be given equal or even greater weight in development decisions. The third

sector is also claimed as more effective because third sector organisations retain surpluses within the community, are geared to target the unmet needs of local people and aim to provide new services and products through the creation of new local jobs (Leadbeater, 1997, Cooper, 1999a, Evans, 2000).

Conceptually, it is important to understand the third sector's relationship with the private and public sectors because the third sector is wide ranging with different elements within it. The third sector is a system of actors whose mode of production differs significantly from that of the "first system" (profit orientated private sector) and the "second system" (state controlled public sector).

This distinctiveness of the "third system" was first conceptualised by Karl Polanyi (1968) in his work on primitive economies, according to Polanyi there are three major transactional modes of economic circulation: market exchange, redistribution and reciprocity.

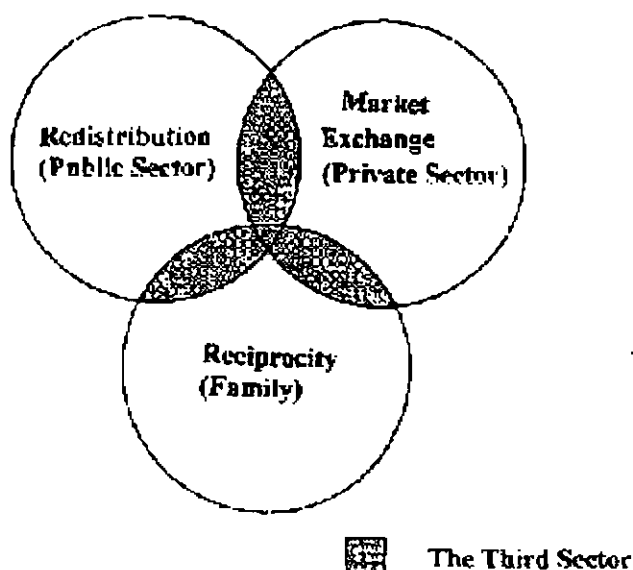
- *Market exchange* in primitive economies involved a product being recognised as something that had exchange value and concerned the separation of buyer and seller. Hence market exchange used a universal equivalent: money. In modern society the private sector undertakes the role of market exchange, as the private sector's mode of economic integration is that of the market.
- *Redistribution* in a primitive economy entailed a third party between the giver and the recipient i.e. a recognised centre. In modern society this role is assigned to the nation state (welfare systems). This mode of circulation entails contributions to the centre (such as taxes) and payments out of it again (such as social security, pensions, benefits etc.). Therefore, redistributive payments to government are an expression of a politically defined obligation and redistributive disbursements are politically determined. (Polanyi, 1968, Latham, 2002, Ankarloo, 2002)
- *Reciprocity* in primitive economies implies people produced goods and services for which they were best suited and shared them with those around them and others reciprocated this. The motivation to produce and share was not for

personal profit, but fear of social contempt, ostracism and loss of social prestige and standing. Examples of this kind of behaviour in contemporary society can be found in the traditional home. No money changes hands between family members, but all contribute according to their abilities to the common welfare and all share according to their needs. The third sector may also be seen to share some of these features, depending as it does on volunteerism motivated by faith or principle, ideas of community benefit and not-for-profit provision of services. (Polanyi, 1968, Latham, 2002, Ankarloo, 2002)

Karl Birkhoelzer in his work for the "Conscise Project" (see Evans, 2000) defines the third system using five criteria, which expand the points above. The first criteria he uses is similar to the conception of Polanyi (1968) in that Birkhoelzer states the third system is a system of actors whose mode of production differs significantly from that of the "first system" (profit orientated private sector) and the "second system" (state controlled public sector). The remaining four criterion used by Birkhoelzer further develops the ideas of Polanyi, placing them in the context of modern society. These are as follows: firstly, the third system has emerged as a result of the failure of the private and public sectors to meet and satisfy needs. Secondly, the third system is a form of self-organisation by citizens who start to produce self- help on local, regional, national and international levels. Thirdly, the "third system" is a form of self- organisation that is not individualistic, but co-operative and collective. Finally, the "third sector system" is organised on a not for profit principle, which ultimately means it is orientated to social and/ or community orientated allocation of surplus profits (Evans, 2000).

The third sector can be simply explained by Figure 1.2, which describes the relationship of the third sector to other sectors, since third sector economic activities can overlap with the private sector, public sector and self-provisioning within the family. Therefore, the third sector is the overlapping space between the public sector (mode of economic integration is that of redistribution), the private sector (mode of economic integration is that of the market) and the self-provisioning of the family (mode of integration is that of reciprocity) (see Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: The Third Sector
Source: Leadbeater (1997) p16.



The welfare state's capacity to meet modern social problems is limited. Families cannot without more help and support, provide more welfare, since self-provisioning largely depends on women's unpaid labour and with more women in employment and more lone parent families, placing yet more burden on the family is unrealistic. Therefore, it is argued by Leadbeater (1997) that the key to the new welfare settlement must come from the third ingredient: the third sector provided by organisations that stand between families, the state and the private sector. Consequently, a new welfare settlement must be based on this new relationship between self-provisioning in the family, state involvement through its regulation of the private sector and direct provision of welfare services, and collective and collaborative forms of self-help and mutual assurance through the voluntary and community sectors. Hence the foregrounding of the VCS in New Labour's efforts to recast the welfare state.

There are few clear operational definitions as to what constitutes a third sector organisation, so I will refer to the concept of the third sector as stated by Wilson & Charlton (1997). In this definition the third sector is taken to mean the community and its representatives, self-help groups, voluntary and not for profit organisations and professional organisations such as Councils of Voluntary Services (CVS). However, some of these terms need further explanation.

1.6.2 The Voluntary Sector

Defining the voluntary sector is also fraught with difficulties, since the voluntary sector is a subset of the third sector. Reading (1994) defines the term voluntary sector organisation using three categories: what they are, what they are not and what they may be. Reading's (1994) definition of voluntary sector organisations is summarised in Box 1.2.

Box 1.2: Reading (1994) Definition of Voluntary Sector Organisations p2.

Voluntary Organisations – What they are:

- Self- governing associations of people who have joined together to take action for communal benefit.
- Organisations founded on voluntary effort.
- A force in society that provides social integration, cohesion and sense of identity.
- A critical voice able to develop a creative tension between community need, social policies and service provision.
- Interactive bodies of people who expect to receive some benefit from their participation in the organisation.

Voluntary Organisations – What they are not:

- Bodies established by statute, or part of local or central government.
- Agencies set up for financial gain.
- Altruistic organisations that expect no benefit for themselves.

Voluntary Organisations – What they may be:

- Organisations, which may employ staff.
- Bodies, which may obtain income from statutory sources.
- Associations, which may be registered as charities.

Taylor (1997) shows the difficulties in defining a typical voluntary sector organisation, describing a typical voluntary sector organisation as locally based, small with multi-purpose staff. However, within this sector there is a huge variety of organisations, ranging from large household name charities to very small organisations which are kept going by the sheer determination of one or two volunteers. Voluntary sector organisations can have a number of functions such as delivering services, acting as a channel for self- help and running campaigns. The coverage of voluntary sector organisations can also vary; some have national headquarters with local branches (such as the Councils for Voluntary Services), while others are a completely local initiative. The staffing of voluntary sector organisations can involve paid staff or be run

completely by volunteers. The voluntary sector also has its own infrastructure in the form of organisations, which provide support services such as training, administrative support, information and development. The way in which Reading (1994) has pulled apart the definition of a voluntary sector organisation, together with the difficulties Taylor (1997) has experienced in defining a typical voluntary sector organisation, demonstrate the lack of a single model and the difficulties of coming to a common agreement about all the features mentioned. The definitions for voluntary sector organisations are principally “pragmatic” and since data are not available for a more sophisticated definition, in this thesis I adopt a broad definition of the voluntary sector devised by Chanan *et al* (2000):

“Traditionally equated loosely with charities or with professionally led non- profit public interest organisations operating outside of the statutory sector in the personal social services.”
Chanan *et al* (2000) p2

1.6.3 The Community Sector

Much policy and academic literature often fails to distinguish between the voluntary sector and the community sector. Failure to make this distinction makes the community sector appear synonymous with what has for many years been referred to in the UK as the voluntary sector. However, there are important distinguishing features between these two sectors. Voluntary sector organisations are more likely to be professionally led, often registered charities. In contrast, community sector organisations are less well- developed, smaller in size, are less likely to have paid staff or be registered as charities. Community sector organisations are less likely to register with third sector umbrella bodies because they often have a political dimension. The community sector also tends to include community representatives that are drawn from communities or localities to serve as a spokesperson on partnerships. For Williams (2002b) the community sector covers a heterogeneous range of activities that he terms as “fourth sector” activities which encompasses informal community actions such as baby sitting circles and car sharing practices through to one- to- one help given to kin, friends and neighbours.

This difference between the voluntary and community sectors is important, because if the community sector is represented as synonymous with the voluntary sector we risk failing to acknowledge the diversity of interests within communities and the fundamental

issue of achieving representativeness on partnerships. Therefore, I will refer to the concept of the community sector as stated by Chanan et al (2000) as my working definition:

“(Voluntary) organisations arising out of communities of locality or interest and being mainly controlled by their own users. Most are small and have no paid staff and about half are probably not registered as charities.” Chanan et al (2000) p2

In the substantive part of the thesis I will also usually refer to “the VCS” meaning the voluntary and community sector taken together.

1.7. Participation and Partnership Working

Sherry Arnstein writing in 1969 about citizen involvement in the planning process in the United States described a “ladder of participation.” This illustrated how an organisation such as a partnership can involve partners in different ways (see Figure 1.3). As the Policy Action Team Report: Community Self- Help (Home Office, 1999) stated “Few people go straight from a situation of no involvement to one of active engagement with their neighbourhood. Knowingly or not, most are on a “ladder of involvement,” with simple acts of good neighbourliness at one end and a regular commitment with a formal voluntary or statutory organisation, or a position of community leadership at the other.” p30.

Figure 1.3: Arnstein’s Ladder of Participation Source: Arnstein (1969) p 217

Degrees of Citizen Power
8. Citizen Control
7. Delegated Power
6. Partnership
Degrees of Tokenism
5. Placation
4. Consultation
3. Informing
Non- Participation
2. Therapy
1. Manipulation

The bottom rungs of the ladder: “manipulation and therapy” describe levels of low or even non-participation. At this level of “involvement,” the aim of the state policy makers may indeed not be to allow people to participate, but to enable the power- holders to cure or educate the participants and achieve public support by public relations. The next three rungs involve more active dialogue with the public. Citizens to varying

degrees, have the right to be heard even if they do not take a direct part in decision-making. In this zone of the ladder we find (3) Informing and (4) Consultation, which describe levels of tokenism. Arnstein sees these levels as just a window dressing ritual, because too frequently the emphasis is on a one-way flow of information with no channel for feedback. Rung 5 (Placation) is simply a higher level of tokenism because the ground rules allow citizens to advise, but retain for the power holders the continued right to decide.

Further up the ladder are levels of citizen power with increasing degrees of decision-making. Citizens can enter into (6) Partnership where power is in fact redistributed through negotiation between citizens and power holders and planning and decision-making responsibilities are shared e.g. through joint committees. At the highest rungs (7) "delegated Power:" citizens hold a clear majority of seats on committees with delegated powers to make decisions and the public now has the power to assure accountability of the programme to them. At the very top of the ladder (8) "Citizen control:" citizens handle the entire job of planning, policymaking and managing a project. An example of this is a neighbourhood corporation with no intermediaries between it and the source of funds.

Figure 1.4: Ladder of Citizen Empowerment Source: Burns, Hambleton & Hoggett (1994) p162

Citizen Control
12. Independent Control
11. Entrusted Control
Citizen Participation
10. Delegated Control
9. Partnership
8. Limited Decentralised Decision Making
7. Effective Advisory Boards
6. Genuine Consultation
5. High Quality Information
Citizen Non- Participation
4. Customer Care
3. Poor Information
2. Cynical Consultation
1. Civic Hype

Burns, Hambleton & Hoggett (1994, pp153- 179) criticised Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation. They argued that a citizen might enjoy different degrees of participation in different spheres of influence (e.g. housing estate or local authority) and in different

areas of decision- making (e.g. making, financing or administering policy) thus making a single ladder a highly generalised measure of citizen participation. It was also noted that the rungs of the ladder should not be considered to be equidistant. They also felt that Arnstein's typology needed modification to fit the UK context in the 1990s. Consequently, Burns, Hambleton & Hoggett (1994) constructed a new 12 rung "Ladder of Citizen Empowerment" (see Figure 1.4).

At the bottom of this modified model (see Figure 2) are four rungs of citizen non-participation. "Civic hype" or extravagant publicity campaigns provide no actual basis for participation; information is distorted, gloss takes over from content and communication is only one way. The second rung is "cynical consultation;" this can take the form of either treating participation as a charade or limiting it to trivial matters. The information made available to the public is often dense and inaccessible; a problem expressed at rung 3: "poor Information."

Rungs 5: "high quality information" and (6) "genuine consultation" are where genuine citizen input begins. It is recognised at this level by local authorities that sound approaches to public involvement need to be supported by high quality information and genuine consultative initiatives. On rungs 7 and below the local authority may commit itself to taking into account the views of citizens before decisions are made, but will not necessarily make a commitment to act on them. Arrangements located on rung 8 and above involve a transfer of at least some power. It is for this reason that the gap between rungs 7 and 8 is a wide one on the ladder.

Rungs 9 and 10 of the ladder: "partnership and delegated power:" delegate more substantial powers over decision- making to the community level. The top two rungs on the ladder: (11) "entrusted control" and (12) "independent control" involve citizens having the power to govern a programme, area or institution more or less independently of local government or other parts of the welfare state.

Thomas (1995) uses a similar metaphor to identify "a ladder of community interaction" (see Figure 1.5) in which more formal organisation of community life (see above the dotted line), rely to some degree on the more casual associations below. The routine, taken- for- granted and more trivial contacts at the foot of the ladder form the

foundation on which all else rests. The more formal interaction above the dotted line will thus depend on the working of the more casual networks below, with Thomas (1995) stating that “their importance is not to be underestimated if we want to create communities that work” p20. However, it is important to note that despite the importance Thomas (1995) places upon the foundations of formalised community interaction within informal interactions, the ladder clearly implies a sense of hierarchy in which formalised community interactions are seen as more important, whilst lower level interactions are only important with respect to how they lead to formalised activity. Thomas (1995) also advocates that most community projects in the UK operate at rungs 7 (i.e. organising a community festival) or rung 8 (i.e. forming a tenants association) which respond to the immediate material needs of citizens.

Figure 1.5: Ladder of Community Interaction Source: Thomas (1995) pp19-20

11. Owning & managing local facilities
10. Working with policy makers
9. Co-operation with other community groups
8. Joining community groups
7. Participating in community activities
6. Informal mutual aid
5. Involvement in informal networks
4. Social contacts; such as the pub, church, community centre
3. Routine contacts; such as picking children up from school everyday
2. Casual Contacts; for example whilst waiting for a bus or shopping
1. Mutual recognition

The models of participation by Arnstein (1969) and Burns, Hambleton & Hoggett (1994) and Thomas (1995) suggest that partnerships can involve people in a number of different ways. For example, at one level, it may be appropriate simply to keep people informed about the work of the partnership without offering the opportunity to shape or influence the initiative in any way. At another level, it is important to consult with people who might be affected by the work of a partnership. This process of consultation can take a number of different forms, but the essential element will be that individuals or groups who are not directly represented by the partnership will have a voice in shaping the initiative.

At a third level, involvement in a partnership moves beyond being consulted to actually participating in the governance and management of the initiative (i.e. being represented

in the decision making process of the partnership). The efficacy of involvement at this level will depend on the intent of the partners, the nature of organisational structures of the initiative and the ability of partners to participate. However, participation at this level implies joint control over or access to the “levers of power.”

Yorkshire Forward (2004) (the Yorkshire and Humberside Development Agency) has gone further in an attempt to define participation, devising an assessment tool for “benchmarking community participation in regeneration,” which is currently being used in the work by the Home Office. It identifies participation as having 4 key dimensions to it (see Table 1.1)

Table 1.1: Key Dimensions to Participation **Source: Yorkshire Forward (2004) p10**

Dimensions to Participation	Explanation
Influence	Real influence over what happens at both the strategic and operational levels.
Inclusive	Valuing participation to ensure Inclusive and equal participation
Communication	Clear information, processes, accessible and transparent in all communication
Capacity	Developing skills, understanding and knowledge of all partners and the organisational capacity of communities and public agencies

These various typologies provide a useful starting point for thinking about possible variations evident in participation and the power relations that surround it. It will be one purpose of this thesis to explore how the practices of participation in community regeneration in North London correspond to these idealised models, whether represented in terms of “ladders” or “dimensions,” or some other metaphors of greater or lesser involvement. The issue of participation as a deepening process (implicit, but not explicit in the “ladder” analogy) and the power relations that surround participation in particular local settings will also be explored, via the case study research.

1.8 Structure of Thesis

Having explored the contemporary notions of the third sector and participation and established some working definitions, the next chapter (Chapter 2) explores how governance and power are conceptualised and the way in which the third sector interplays with the themes of local governance. Chapter 3 reviews the methodological framework of the thesis. Chapter 4 will begin by tracing the evolution of partnership

working and the role of voluntary and community sector participation within urban regeneration initiatives via a policy review under two main themes. Firstly, I will outline four main phases in the political arena: the social democratic consensus urban entrepreneurialism, the competitive bidding regime and the third way consensus. Secondly, I will analyse the discourses (and definitions) of community, voluntary sector and community participation that underpin modern urban policy and explore how these have changed over time. In addition, this chapter also explores the practical contradictions of the emerging urban policy agenda.

In Chapters 5, 6, and 7, two primary data case studies of on-going exercises in community participation are examined in-depth: the Haringey Community Empowerment Network/ Local Strategic Partnership (HarCEN/ HSP) and the Enfield Community Empowerment Network/ Local Strategic Partnership (ECEN/ESP). Evidence will be drawn from participant observations (in Chapter 5), questionnaires (in Chapter 6) and semi- structured interviews with key informants from the VCS (in Chapter 7). More detailed information of the methodology employed will be included in each of these three chapters, but essentially what is presented here is an interpretation of how the attempt to incorporate the VCO sector in urban regeneration policy in these two areas has (and is) unfolding, via an analysis of the policy implementation process, as seen in the experience and judgements of key VCO actors involved. What is discovered is that local as well as structural factors play an important role in determining outcomes, which are in fact highly differentiated in the two arenas. In Chapter 8 the research will offer a series of recommendations for future voluntary and community sector participation within the CEN/ LSP agenda and whether there is a need for new policy developments for more effective and fruitful engagement of third sector partners. This chapter will also offer a more theoretically based explanation of the contrasting experiences of the two case study areas, via notions of “political subcultures” and “models of power” and will relate findings back to the debates about the nature of governance in the modern state.

CHAPTER 2

OUTWARDS AND DOWNWARDS: THEORISING THE “SHIFT OF POWER” TOWARDS THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTORS IN LOCAL REGENERATION POLICY

2. INTRODUCTION

The notion of the third sector and its role in regeneration emerges from a number of ideological and political roots, most of which draw attention to power relationships. This chapter debates a key theme of the thesis; the extent to which the current changes in regeneration and local government policies represent a fundamental shift of power outwards and downwards to the VCS. The approach adopted is to explain this shift in power with reference to some broader theoretical debates and the broader political and economic changes, and then to examine the controversies surrounding these theoretical debates. It draws heavily upon three discourses in the current literature: firstly, the debate about the shift from “local government to local governance;” secondly, “theories of power” as expressed by Lukes, Foucault and Weber; and thirdly new ideas about how power is exercised in partnerships and coalitions. The chapter concludes by examining how the third sector interplays with themes of local governance, specifically looking at issues surrounding representation and accountability and power relations in this “New Localism” using regeneration partnerships as an expression of local governance. Finally, a conceptual framework is presented which draws on ideas from these bodies of theory, whose role is to drive the research questions and identify types of evidence needed to answer these.

2.1. From Local Government to Local Governance

Recent research in the UK has been concerned with the shifting styles and processes of local government. This has led a range of authors to focus upon a shift from local government to local governance. It is argued that over time there has been a shift in the pattern of governance, so that “twenty years ago political institutions and political leaders were much more self-reliant and it was assumed- for good reason – the state governed Britain” (Pierre & Stoker, 2000 p29). In contrast, today, although the state retains a key role, governance now involves the intervention of a broad and complex network of actors. Local, regional and national political elites alike seek to forge partnerships with private businesses, voluntary associations and other societal actors

to mobilise resources across public- private borders in order to enhance their chances of guiding society towards politically defined goals. Thus governing Britain has become a matter of multi level, multi nodal or networked governance. Consequently, in order to understand governance a focus on multiple locations of decision- making in both spatial and sectoral terms and the way in which exchanges between actors in the various locations are conducted is required (Goodwin & Painter, 1996, Cochrane, 1993, Pierre & Stoker, 2000, Pierre, 1998, Gibbs, *et al*, 2001).

The traditional use of governance and its dictionary entry defines it as a synonym of government. However, in the growing literature on governance there is a redirection in its use. Governance according to Rhodes (1996) signifies "a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new *process* of governing; or a changed *condition* of ordered ruling or a new *method* by which society is governed." p32. By this Rhodes (1996) is referring to a new method in which the dominance of hierarchies is challenged by mixed market mechanisms and a changed *condition/ process* by which local government (governing through a single dominant institution) gives way to local governance (governing via a multiplicity of stakeholders). Therefore, governance is ultimately about processes, policies and people (i.e. individual citizens, taxpayers and service users) rather than structures and institutions, but it does invariably involve organisations.

In its widest sense governance acknowledges that the political system is increasingly differentiated and refers to a flexible pattern of public decision-making based on a loose network of individuals and groups and coalitions. It conveys the idea that public decisions rest less within hierarchically organised bureaucracies and take place more in long term relationships between key individuals located in a diverse set of key organisations at various territorial levels (John, 2001). These collective interests are defined and pursued at a variety of levels: neighbourhood, local authority, the region, the state and supranational (e.g. the EU). These networks are more open, complex and potentially more unstable than those in the "government" regime. In particular, governance implies there are new and stronger networks between government and non-government agencies (i.e. private, voluntary and community sectors). In its narrowest sense governance relates to the transition of the state from direct producer

of goods and services to an overseer of their production (i.e. the state is involved in steering and not rowing) (Mohan, 1999, Wolman, 1999).

A useful description of this transition from local government to local governance is produced by John (2001), who summarises these dimensions of change in a tabulated format (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Local Government and Governance Contrasted Source: John (2001) p17.

	Government	Governance
Number of Institutions	<i>Few</i>	<i>Many</i>
Bureaucratic Structure	<i>Hierarchical Consolidated</i>	<i>Decentralised Fragmented</i>
Horizontal Networks	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Extensive</i>
International Networks	<i>Minimal</i>	<i>Extensive</i>
Democratic Linkage	<i>Representative</i>	<i>Representative + New Experiments</i>
Policies	<i>Routinized</i>	<i>Innovative Learning</i>
Central Government	<i>Direct Control</i>	<i>Decentralises + Micro intervention</i>
Leadership	<i>Collegial/ Clientelist</i>	<i>Mayoral/ Charismatic</i>

2.1.1 Understanding Local Governance: the Role of the State

Whilst the shift in governance is well recognised in the literature, there is less certainty as to how best to conceptualise this change, particularly in terms of the role of the state. Table 2.2 sets out a series of differing forces driving governance change. In seeking to theorise such change, three broad perspectives are evident; those that see state power as being reduced and dispersed, those that stress the continued role of the central state by virtue of its control of vast resources and legitimacy; and those that seek to argue for a fundamentally different model of community based governance.

Table 2.2: The Forces driving Local Governance Synthesised from John (2001) & Rhodes (1997)

Forces Driving Governance	Description
Minimal State and Institutional Reform	Local government has been reduced to simply one actor amongst many, having become "strategic enablers" rather than the direct deliverers of policy. This has involved a reduction in public sector intervention, institutional proliferation and the blurring of clarity between the public and private sectors, with functions having been transferred to quangos. There is a greater use of markets and quasi- markets (i.e. where some competing agencies are non-profit) to deliver "public" services.
New Self Organising Networks	Interdependence and resource exchange between organisations from the public, private and third sectors and the significant autonomy from the state creates new horizontal and national networks. Trust is the central co-ordinating mechanism in networks. Government may seem to manage these networks, but there is no sovereign authority. Rhodes (1996) and Stoker (1998) believe governance as self- organising networks presents a challenge to governability because networks can become autonomous from the state and resist government steering and develop their own policies and mould their own environments. Thus governance as self- organising networks are prime examples of "governing without government."
New Policy Initiatives: New Corporate Public Management	Adoption of a commercial style of management, by the public sector. Policies are less routinized and based on competition, local innovation and capacity building, illustrating that the management practices of the private sector have an important influence on the public sector. Such methods include explicit output performance measures, value for money, best value, closeness to customers, and incentive structures (i.e. market competition) into public service provision through contracting out, quasi- markets and consumer choice.
Good Governance	These ideas of "good governance" are used to join the New Public Management (NPM) to the advocacy of liberal democracy. It is also recognised that "good governance" is also closely related to civic engagement and that social cohesion in communities depends on social capital - networks, norms and trust.
Socio-cybernetic System	The interaction among the various stakeholders in the policy making process. Policy outcomes are no longer the product of actions by central government. The political system is increasingly differentiated and "centreless" (i.e. there is no longer a mono-centric or unitary government; there is not one but many centres linking many levels of government). Although, central government may pass a law this subsequently involves interaction among key players from the public, private and third sectors. Governance is about "managing a nobody- in- charge world." (Stoker, 1998). This illustrates that all actors in a particular policy area need each other, as they each possess knowledge or resource capital to contribute to the implementation of a policy i.e. these interactions are based on the recognition of inter- dependencies. Examples of these new patterns of interaction include multi- agency partnerships, co-operatives and joint ventures.
Dilemmas of co-ordination and accountability	Broad networks diffuse the lines of accountability and control, so it is now difficult to know who makes the decisions.

Reduced and Dispersed State Power

In terms of state power being reduced and dispersed, three theoretical standpoints have been particularly influential:

Self- Governing Networks Perspective: In this viewpoint, there is no sovereign authority because networks have significant autonomy. The state becomes over-seer of a collection of inter- organisational networks, made up of governmental and societal actors with no sovereign actor able to steer or regulate. Thus the state remains responsible for a system over which it has little control. (Rhodes, 1996, 1997, Holliday, 2000, Bailey, 2003)

Multi – Level Governance (MLG): The Multi- level governance perspective sees state power and authority as dispersed rather than concentrated and political action occurs “at and between the various levels of governance.” (Jones & Clarke, 2001 cited in Goodwin *et al*, 2002 p22). The state is treated as a bureaucratic organisation and not as a social relation. Multi- level governance assumes that the state has power of its own and not in relation to forces acting in and through its apparatus (particularly with respect to the EU).

Hollowing Out: Jessop (1990) in his “hollowing out” thesis suggests the nation state is undergoing a fundamental restructuring and strategic reorientation and that its dominance is being undermined by three inter- related processes: de-nationalisation, de-statisation and internationalisation. Jessop (1994) argues there has been a shift in the balance of power, with the relative power of the nation state being reduced, whilst the relative power of both the supranational and subnational state has been increased. He argues there has been a transition from a “Keynesian Welfare State” (KWS) to a “Schumpeterian Workfare State” (SWS). A transition, which has been guided by, increased internationalisation, new technologies and a shift from a Fordist to a Post Fordist society. Jessop (1994) argues that this shift has weakened the capacity of the nation state and reduced its autonomy, as it has transferred power “upwards” to supranational bodies and “downwards” through devolving powers to local and regional levels. He draws the conclusion that these transformations have resulted in various

sets of “tangled hierarchies” and the downward devolution of power entails more politics rather than less.

The “hollowing out” of the nation state summarises many of the changes, which have and are taking place in the UK. According to Rhodes (1997: 53-54) the “hollowing out” of the nation state refers to four main factors: first, privatisation and limiting the space and form of public intervention; second, central and local government departments have lost functions to alternative delivery systems or agencies; third, the loss of functions by British government to EU institutions and fourth, limiting the discretion of public servants through the “New Public Management,” with its emphasis on managerial accountability and clearer political control through a sharper distinction between politics and administration.

Jessop (1994) is, however careful not to imply the “death of the nation state.” He believes there remains a “pivotal” central political role for the nation state, but it is a role that has been redefined as a result of the more general redistribution of the local, regional, national and supranational levels of organisation. Jessop (1994) also considers unless or until supranational political organisations acquire greater governmental powers and some measure of popular democratic legitimacy, the nation state will remain a key factor as the highest instance of democratic political accountability. Thus the nation state will retain many of its juridical and discursive functions in keeping with its headquarters status.

State- Centric Views: From Hollowing Out to Filling In

Some academics argue that the “hollowing out” metaphor is not appropriate to capture the current processes and events taking place in the UK. This is because “hollowing out” is not uni-dimensional, and as elements of the nation state are being “hollowed out” other elements of the nation state are being “filled in.” Poulantzas (1978:169) argued: “the state is incompressible” as by virtue of its ongoing expansion, the “hollowed out” branches or department of state apparatus need to be relocated within its power bloc to maintain the state’s economic functions. In a similar vein to Goodwin *et al* (2002), Taylor (2000) criticise the “hollowing out” thesis and the implicit assumption that policy networks involve a diminished role for government. This is

because Taylor (2000) believes some of the high profile cross agency taskforces established by the Blair government (i.e. the Social Exclusion Unit) involve "filling in" rather than "hollowing out" and are an expression of a more "hands-on" directive role for government. Maloney *et al* (1999) cited in Leach & Percy-Smith (2001) also suggest that local authorities continue to exercise a crucial role as initiators, orchestrators and paymasters of community groups.

Davies (2002) supports a more state centric perspective. He distinguishes between three forms of governance: the traditional model of "governance by government" where local government is the pre-eminent actor in local politics. "Governance by partnership," reflects the top-down interpretation of urban regeneration politics and "governance by regimes," closely resembles the regime politics in the United States. Davies (2002) makes it clear that "governance by partnership" is not necessarily a step away from "governance by government" towards "governance by regimes," but is in fact reinforcing power and extending the boundaries of the state. Thus Davies (2002, 2001) argues networks are not the primary mode of governance in the politics of urban regeneration in the UK and that in fact central government is becoming more influential in the local policy arena.

Davies (2002, 2001) also argues that partnerships should be treated as a distinct mode of governance, which fits neither the "old" model of governance by government nor the "new" model of governance by network. Davies (2002) goes on to state that this mode of governance: "governance by partnership" is simultaneously characterised by the diffusion and augmentation of state power, i.e. not everything is moving in the same direction (Goodwin *et al* 2002, Rhodes, 1996, Holiday, 2000, Syrett & Baldock, 2001, Bailey, 2001)

What these various analyses point to is the existence of a paradoxical process of decentralisation and centralisation in the New Labour government's approach, in which responsibilities for regeneration are imprisoning rather than liberating local political initiatives. For example, in areas where new participatory mechanisms have been established as part of the Labour government's drive to re-build local communities and where they have succeeded in mobilising sections of a given community, they have not given local citizens necessarily more control over local politics. These participatory

mechanisms have frequently failed to produce bottom- up networks largely because non- state actors do not have sufficient leverage, once they are involved, in order to make a difference. Consequently, Davies (2002, 2001) believes the state is trying to increase its capacity to “steer” and although the state may be relinquishing direct control, it is attempting to purchase wider effective control. It is attempting to buy a new governing capacity in localities, rather than leaving local governance to markets and networks. In this context the distinction between “steering” and “rowing” is less clear.

Davies (2002) concludes that the politics of urban regeneration in the UK are the politics of “governance by partnership” and instead of the growing autonomy of local institutions that Rhodes (1996) makes a strong case for, there is increasingly political centralisation in the UK. Consequently, instead of networks and mixed markets being the dominant trend in the politics of urban regeneration, Davies (2002) believes the dominant trend is a reassertion hierarchy for three main reasons. The first is the “elite contempt” in which the Labour government, despite the rhetoric of decentralisation, holds local government. The second is the lack of collaborative resources available to potential partners. The third is the continuing absence of a culture of community activism among business elites in the UK. Gibbs *et al* (2001) study on the Humber sub region also supports the state centric perspective of local governance, as this case study revealed a significant and continuing role for local government, rather than experiencing a shift towards the new structures of governance that were documented above. In this case study there was evidence of a centralisation of state power, or as Taylor (2002) cited in Blakeley (2003) states “governance signifies a change in the *methods* of control, *not* a general loss of control.” p47.

Community Governance

The underpinnings or the forces driving community based governance forward, according to Stewart (2000) lie in part in philosophical arguments about the importance of bottom- up ways of life, but also in the dissatisfaction with government and formal representative democracy. Community governance emphasises the responsibilities of a community itself in the process of governing. Community governance embraces issues of community- based decision- making, of power and of management in local areas or neighbourhoods. Citizens, either individually or collectively via voluntary organisations,

are given the opportunity to share in the process of government. At the same time whilst the local authority loses much of its traditional role, its coordinating or steering role is enhanced (Stewart, 2000). Therefore, according to Blakeley (2003) community governance contradicts the self - governing network perspective and state centric views of governance by combining the increased role of the community in self- government with an enhanced leadership role for local authorities.

Community governance is characterised by three main elements, according to Clarke & Stewart (1994) cited in Sullivan (2003). These include firstly, a prime responsibility for securing the well-being of communities in an uncertain and complex world. Secondly, working in partnership to meet needs and securing well-being and finally, finding new ways of communicating with citizens, to identify community needs in order that collective choices may be exercised. Underpinning these characteristics are three different models of community governance each with a distinctive perspective on the role of local government (see Table 2.3)

Table 2.3: Community Governance and the role of Local Government
Source: Sullivan (2003)

Models of Community Governance	Role of Local Government
Community Government	Local government has the responsibility to set the framework and establish the rules of engagement for partners and communities. Local government is also responsible for developing more participative mechanisms or techniques. The problem here is whether local authorities are in fact willing and able to move beyond a politics of consumer satisfaction and consultation to a more deliberative and participatory democratic politics.
Local Governance	Their particular responsibility is to ensure that the voice(s) of communities are harnessed and heard. However, while opportunities to participate must be offered to citizens in this model, citizens themselves are not required to take advantage of them (i.e. the focus of the activity is on networks which may limit the extent to which citizens are actually enabled to take part.)
Citizen Governance	Suspicious of "government orientated" models, seeing them as drawing on communities in order to shore up government institutions rather than actually promoting increased citizen participation in their own governance. Citizen governance ultimately operates at a number of levels within localities and decision- making is devolved to the most appropriate level, which is often the neighbourhood. Key agencies such as local government are the "enablers" of community action with a specific remit to embrace community interests at the strategic level.

2.1.2 Power and Politics: Local Democracy, Representation and Accountability

These models illustrate there are a number of contradictions, tensions and paradoxes surrounding the local governance debate and the role of the nation state. For this thesis the issues arising from this debate raise a number of questions: how can the new era of local governance be best characterised? What is the redefined role of the nation state and the VCO sector in this new era? These points are refined into research questions in Chapter 3. However, these debates also raise important issues of power and politics, pointing to differing views as to what forces are steering the process of local governance. Some authors suggest that the move towards a system of local governance has allowed power to seep upwards towards central government (Malpass, 1994). Conversely, other authors suggest that a new system of "community governance" is in the process of being created, thus power is seeping downwards (John, 1997, Southern, 2002, Gibbs, *et al*, 2001). It has also been suggested that as well as seeping upwards and downwards, power is simultaneously shifting outwards to a variety of non- municipal organisations (Kearns, 1995, Pierre, 1998).

A major controversy surrounding the notion of power within local governance is the emphasis of local governance on steering, enabling, decentralising and working in partnership, which appears to suggest the dispersal rather than the concentration of power. But there is less clarity as to who possesses power, and how it is exercised in this new complex world of local governance. Thus critics of local governance believe that in the absence of clear democratic accountability, established sectoral interests exercise power to the detriment of the wider public interest (Lasswell, 1958 cited in Leach & Percy- Smith, 2001).

The evolution of local governance is also a process in which different organisations maybe involved at different times for different purposes. Yet this does not imply that local governance has been effective in the transfer of power from the select few to the mass of people. For example, in practice the distribution of power between the organisations involved in partnership working can be very unequal. It is also pertinent to ask whether the partnerships developed through governance undermine democracy by restricting access to "insider groups," leaving other interests under represented and excluded (Stoker, 1998).

The marked centralisation of powers in Britain and the loss of local authority autonomy are also part of a wider debate about local democracy, representation and accountability. Certain features of governance may present opportunities to enhance or constrain local governance. These opportunities and constraints ultimately depend on how local democracy is defined. For example if the "*representative model*" (indirect: government for the people) is adopted governance appears to have negative consequences for democracy. Whilst if "*participatory*" (involving communities in direct access to power and maximising citizen engagement), "*deliberative*" (inclusivity and democratic dialogue) or "*associative*" (strengthening power of local, voluntary and self-governing associations) models of democracy (i.e. direct: government by the people) are adopted, governance appears to present opportunities for enhancing local democracy (Howard & Sweeting, 2007). However, it is important to note that even participatory democracy has elements, which define participation in ways that undermine democratic potential. For example, local governance links local democracy to the blurring boundaries of the state and civil society, but this is not the blurring of equals (Cunningham, 2002, Smith & Wales, 1999, Smith & Wales, 2000).

Another issue underlying the development of deliberative democratic politics is the problem of social exclusion or representativeness. To what extent do these new forms of deliberative democratic politics address the need to take account of identity politics or, "politics of presence" based on education, class, gender, race, ethnicity and disability (Annette, 2003). For example, some people tend to appear on a whole range of partnerships, often in the name of different associations, which raises a number of questions as to whether they are representing their own individual opinion or those of the association they purport to represent, let alone the degree to which they represent the views of the wider community. As Elster (1997) cited in Blakeley (2003) points out, the problem of establishing spaces of participation which by their very existence can create a sense of obligation for citizens to participate may well lead to a "self-selecting elite."

The "hollowing out" of the nation state and the institutional complexity of governance has also obscured accountability,¹ (i.e. who is accountable to whom for what),

¹ Accountability has two dimensions: "the giving of an account and being held to account." (Wilson, 1998 cited in Blakeley, 2003:6)

contributing to the "democratic deficit." Burns *et al* (1994: 277) distinguishes between "upward" accountability towards an elected or non- elected body and "downward" accountability to local users, groups and communities. A good illustration of Burns *et al*'s (1994) idea of "upward" and "downward" accountability is that of partnerships. This is because, partnerships are dependent on central funding agencies and are therefore accountable upwards in terms of performance and contractual criteria, whilst the downward accountability of partnerships to the local community they are presumed to represent, tends to be limited. Despite such institutional bodies being linked back to the centre via regulatory mechanisms, their non- elected nature raises questions for traditional representative democracy. Firstly, to what extent can such agencies be held to account given that their non- elected nature undermines the concept of accountability to the electorate via the ballot box? Secondly, to what extent are those working in such agencies and partnerships representative of and responsive to, the community they serve? Little indication is given as to how non- elected institutions such as partnerships or networks can be held to account, particularly by those groups who have no resource power of their own (i.e. citizens, voluntary and community sector groups). (Rhodes, 1997, Blakeley, 2003, Atkinson, 2007)

In summary, the implications of this new local governance appear to be contentious, contradictory, paradoxical and riddled with tensions, as fragmentation and centralisation coexist. To some authors local governance represents a positive step towards a more inclusive local government and wider community participation in decision- making. This is because the dispersal and decentralisation of authority involved in local governance increases the opportunity for widening participation and representation of previously marginalised groups to achieve a more pluralist democracy. It also enlists more resources to secure effective government outcomes. (John, 1997)

To others, local governance tends to be criticised under three main areas: fragmentation, steering and accountability. Some authors believe the increased complexity of the institutional landscape causes fragmentation of decision making as the government no longer control the levers necessary to realise their objectives. The divided responsibilities among the various stakeholders in the policy process are criticised for creating confusion, conflict and gridlock. The proliferation of agencies and

the level of government are also criticised for severely reducing any prospects for effective democratic control. Networked governance is seen by some as being anti-democratic, because business elites often controlled large sums of public money in the absence of public and democratic accountability. In response to such critiques regeneration partnerships are now commonly encouraged to prioritise issues of community participation and empowerment in at least programme planning and delivery. This thesis will explore these debates further, not in the sense of hoping to find if one or other interpretation is more “correct,” but in the expectation of creating theoretically based accounts of what is happening in particular time- place and policy specific circumstances, drawing upon the different theoretical perspectives.

2.2 Power, City Politics and Local Government

2.2.1 Controversies: What is Power?

The issue of power is clearly central to the discourse of local governance and indeed to the role of the third sector. In seeking to gain an insight into the nature of multi-sectoral partnerships as an expression of the system of local governance, it is essential to analyse the power relations involved, variously labelled and described, within the existing literature (see Table 2.4).

Table 2.4: Modes of Power Source: Allen (2000) pp8-43 & McLean (1996) p398-399 & Lukes (1974) p17-18.

Modes of Power	Description
Coercion	To compel by force or it's threatened use
Manipulation	To conceal the real intent behind an action in order to gain advantage
Persuasion	To appeal or suggest to others the merits of a particular action, whilst accepting the possibility of refusal
Authority	Something that is claimed and, once recognised serves as the basis by which others willingly comply
Domination	To impose or constrain the free choice of others despite possible resistance
Bureaucratic	A form of institutional rule- bound power based upon a clearly defined hierarchy of office
Provocation	To incite or induce a certain course of action

One of the most widely documented is that of Lukes (1974), who in his book entitled *Power: A Radical View* distinguishes between “three dimensions of power” (see Table 2.5). The locus of power in the “one- dimensional view of power” is determined by

identifying who prevails in cases of decision-making where there is an observable conflict. The stress here is on the study of actual, concrete, observable behaviour.

Table 2.5: Lukes (1974) Three Dimensions of Power Synthesised from Joyce (2001) p63

The Three Dimensions of Power	Description
The One Dimensional View	Focuses on whose views prevailed in decision- making.
The Two Dimensional View	Involves examining both decision- making and non- decision- making. This dimension of power recognises that non- decision making may also be an exercise of power, as failure or refusal to act may be evidence of inequalities of power.
The Three Dimensional View	Ability to control the political agenda by the ability to manipulate people's needs and preferences.

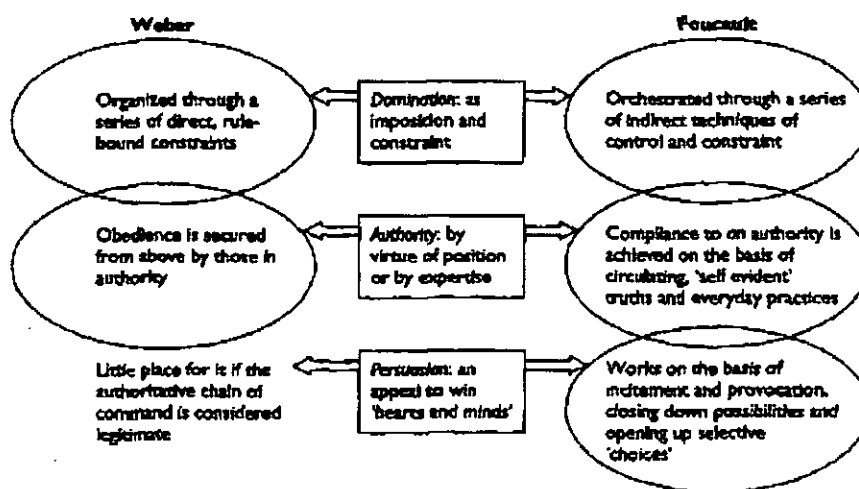
“The two- dimensional view of power” incorporates into the analysis of power relations the question of control over the agenda and the way in which potential issues are kept out of the political process. Therefore, the two- dimensional view has two faces, the first is that already identified in the one- dimensional view, while the second brings the idea of “*mobilisation of bias*” to the fore on the discussion of power. The “mobilisation of bias” refers to a set of predominant values, beliefs, rituals and institutional procedures (i.e. the rules of the game) that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain individuals or groups at the expense of others. Those who benefit are placed in a preferred position to defend and promote their vested interests). The two- dimensional view of power involves examining both decision- making (a choice among alternative modes of action) and non- decision- making (a decision that results in the suppression of a latent challenge to the values or interests of the decision-maker). An example of a non- decision could be that B fails to act because B anticipates A's reaction.

Under the “three- dimensional view of power” it is believed some types of power such as manipulation and authority may not involve conflict. It is also advocated that it is highly unsatisfactory to suppose that power is only exercised in situations of conflict, because it ignores the crucial point that the most effective use of power is to prevent such conflict from arising in the first place. The insistence in the two- dimensional view of power that non- decision- making power only exists where there are grievances, which are denied entry into the political process, is also criticised in the three- dimensional view. This is because it implies that if no grievances can be found there is a genuine consensus - thus ruling out the possibility of false or manipulated consensus.

What one may have here is a "latent conflict," which consists in a contradiction between the interests of those exercising power and real interests of those they exclude. Thus the three-dimensional view of power is concerned with the ability to control the political agenda by the ability to manipulate people's needs and preferences (see Lukes, 1974, p32 for a conceptual map of power on the basis of the three-dimensional view).

In addition to Lukes' conceptualisation of power, the theoretical literature tends to define power in two main ways: "power as possessed" and "power as exercised." These two theoretical views of power differ primarily over how power is exercised. These two contrasting theories of power and their relationships to different modes of power are summarised in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Two Contrasting Theories of Power and their Relationship to different modes of Power
Source: Allen (2000) p27



"Power as possessed" is the most traditional notion of power. Here power is reasoned as something, which is held over others; a capacity "possessed" by certain individuals, groups or institutions who use it directly to secure their interests. Consequently, here power is conceived as repressive, coercive and negative, because those that have power and those that are in authority exercise their power to get people to do things that they otherwise would not have done. For example, Marxists readings of power within cities views it as residing with those who made the city work in their interests i.e. the capitalists or the bourgeoisie. Similarly, Social Interactionists such as Max Weber saw power in cities residing in institutions and gatekeepers of the city who had the power to control and distribute resources. Thus Marxists and Weber's ideas of power

and who gets to exercise power is relatively straightforward – either an individual has it or they do not (Watson, 1999, Allen, 2000).

"Power as exercised" is a more fluid concept and an indirect affair where power is seen imminent in, and constitutive of, all social relations. Possibilities are closed down for individuals rather than their being any conscious decision by anyone. Here, this notion of power is pluralistic and rests on the ideals that underpin democratic city politics. Thus theoretically, "power as exercised" is the power of different interest groups within cities that have the ability to influence decisions through democratic means. It is important to note that because of the democratic ideals of "power as exercised" it fails to acknowledge the structural interests (i.e. those of capital) and the way in which power tends to be concentrated in the hands of specific individuals (i.e. councillors and political agents). (Watson, 1999, Allen, 2000)

2.2.2 Foucault and Governmentality:

The French philosopher Michel Foucault further developed the ideas surrounding "power as exercised". Foucault's ideas of power suggest power is never in anyone person's hands; instead it is something, which works its way into individual's imaginations and serves to constrain how they act. For example, the power of the institution does not pass from the top- down, rather it circulates through an institution's organisational practices and these organisational practices act like a "grid" provoking and inciting certain causes of action and denying others. However, it is important to note that compliance is by no means simple and depends on how far individuals internalise what is being laid down as self- evident. Foucault terms this as "permanent provocation," by this he means indirect techniques of self- regulation, which induce appropriate forms of behaviour. (Smart, 1985).

Foucault's work gives rise to a distinctive notion of power, in which he emphasises the importance of local or micro manifestations of power (i.e. bio politics), the role of professional knowledge in the legitimisation of such power relationships and the productive rather than negative characteristics of the effects of power. Foucault (1980) cited in Watson (1999) argues power must be understood "as the process which through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens or reverses them; or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from

one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they effect.” p214. Thus Foucault sees power as a productive force, a multiplicity of force relations rather than a negative or repressive force in the belief that power would be a poor thing if all it did were oppress. He also sees power as operating in a capillary fashion and relational rather than possessed or seized. (Horrocks & Jevtic, 1999)

Foucault specifically uses the term “governmentality.” to refer to a form of power that sets out to structure the actions of others. Foucault used the notion of “governmentality” to analyse specific historical problems associated with regulating social relations between governments and citizens. Therefore, in this sense “governmentality” refers to the administrative structures of the state, the patterns of self- government of individuals and the regulatory principles of social structures, as Foucault’s prime concern was to understand how personal liberty, autonomy and choice could be reconciled with the state’s need to govern (Schofield, 2002).

Foucault defines “governmentality” as “the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses, reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit complex form of power, which has as its target populations” (Foucault, 1991 p102). This broad definition can be taken to apply to any type of procedure, analysis, reflection or calculation that aims to shape the conduct of some person or persons towards certain principles or goals. Therefore, “governmentality” encompasses not only how we exercise authority over others or states and populations are governed, but also how individuals govern themselves. Thus “governmentality” is used to signify two main things. Firstly, it refers to the ongoing activity of government as carried out through all manner of “forces” (legal, architectural, professional, administrative, financial, judgmental), “techniques” (notation, computation, calculation, estimation, evaluation) and “devices” (surveys, charts, systems of training, building forms) that promise to regulate decisions and actions of individuals, groups and organisations. Secondly, it refers to “styles of political reasoning,” which by virtue make these particular techniques and practices “technologies of government” (Rose, 1996, Mackinnon, 2000, Dean, 1999).

Foucault also links power with two other elements: knowledge and resistance. This is illustrated by Foucault, cited in Horrocks & Jevtic (1999), when he states: “No power is

exercised without extraction, appropriation, distribution or retention of knowledge. At this level we do not have knowledge on one hand and society on the other, or science and state; we have the basic forms of power/knowledge"p120. Consequently, these are important ways of thinking about city politics because it illustrates the importance of information (as one aspect of knowledge) and the lack of it, as well as the recognition that there are many sites of struggle and confrontation within cities. This focus also highlights the importance of the "local" and the "specific" in city politics. Foucault's notion of power is much more complex and difficult to comprehend than Weber's. This is because it side-steps the question of "who has power?" Once the idea that power must be overt, identifiable and vested in someone is removed; it becomes harder to identify what exactly power is and where it lies. Perhaps what is most striking about the notion of "governmentality" is its spatial nature and the role cities play in these spaces because cities are both the spaces *upon* which "governmentality" practices operate and spaces *through* which they operate. (Rose, 1996, Watson, 1999, Rabinow, 1984, Allen, 2000)

In summary, "power as possessed" sees power as a direct and visible relationship through which people wield their legitimate powers. The focus of the Weberian approach is upon where power lies, who possesses it and who does not (i.e. who is at the top and bottom of the hierarchy). In contrast, "power as exercised" focuses upon indirect practices internalised by individuals who bring themselves into line (see Table 2.6). Here Foucault is concerned with "how" questions: how power is exercised and how power circulates and at the heart of his notion of "governmentality" is the wider question of how we govern and are governed, (i.e. by what means, mechanisms, procedures, instruments, tactics, techniques, technologies, vocabularies, knowledge, expertise, strategies, means of calculation and rationality).

Table 2.6: The Threads of Theory

Source: Allen (2000) p39

	Questions	Theoretical Claims	Evidence
W e b e r	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who holds power? Who controls the rule-making machinery? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domination by authority involves the imposition of rule-bound constraints on the context of others. Bureaucratic power is rational, top-down affair with clearly defined lines of authority and delegation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The type of evidence sought include the visible actions of governing bodies, in particular: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The forms of expertise and institutional authority draw upon. The rule making process.
F o u c a u l t	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is power exercised? How does power circulate? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domination works on the basis of self-resistant rather than external constraint. People bring themselves to order. Power is proactive; it is brought to bear on people's actions, closing down rather than opening up possibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The types of evidence sought in this instance are more elusive, in particular: <p>The indirect techniques and practices, which routinely "govern" our lives.</p> <p>The ideas and accepted "truths" which influence our behaviour.</p>

These questions direct the reader towards the circulation of power, to a net like organisation, which in the context of urban regeneration partnerships would encompass relationships between and within a range of sectoral actors. In this context Foucault's questions draw attention to the array of techniques ranging from the persuasive tactics of government agencies and the proactive game play between all those involved, especially between public and third sector interests (see Table 2.6). Such questions are important because what we want to understand is how different locales are constituted as authoritative and powerful, how different agents are assembled with specific powers and how different domains are constituted as governable and administratable. Consequently, power from this point of view is not a "zero sum game" it is rather the resultant of the loose and changing assemblage of governmental techniques, practices and rationalities. (Dean, 1999)

2.2.3 Governmentality in Local Government Today

"Governmentality" is an important notion for this study on governance and the third sector as it takes one back to the fundamentals to think about the basic question of how governments govern; what "devices," "forces" and "techniques" they employ and what is the particular "style of political reasoning" that underwrites this; and informs the different roles of the nation state, private sector, voluntary sector and citizens. Obviously, this varies significantly over time, raising the question of how "devices," "forces," "techniques" and "political reasoning" inform "governmentality" under the Third Way discourse.

Central to the Third Way discourse developed by the Blair government was the idea of the active citizen and the notion that "for citizens to constitute the process of government depends upon them being able to play a full role in society" (Prior et al, 1995 p72). This according to Raco & Imrie (2000) emphasised a shift or transformation towards a "rights and responsibilities" agenda. The "mentalities" of government in this "rights and responsibilities" agenda include the recasting of the state and civil society. State organisations began to develop empowerment techniques to enhance the capacities of individuals and communities to enable them to take more responsibilities of their own actions and future welfare (i.e. through notions of citizenship). New Labour's "control was at a distance" designed to engineer individual behaviour through the use of performance indicators, emphasising that it is an individual's own responsibility to climb out of social exclusion. (Giddens, 1998, Blakeley, 2003)

Foucault's notion of "government through the governed" provides a useful starting point for consideration, that the function of government is to govern without governing society. Under the Third Way, government is not seeking to govern society per se, but to promote individual and institutional conduct that is consistent with government objectives. The Third Way discourse also affirms Foucault's idea of "reflexive government" – a rationality where the ends of a policy become the means, because the programmes and agendas, which characterise the Third Way, have adopted the discourse of community as representing both the subjects and the objects of policy. The Third Way discourse also reflects Foucault's paradoxical assertion that in return for a little extra freedom of action, subjects come under greater monitoring scrutiny and surveillance by the state. This is largely because the art of Third Way government is bound into the reduction of the state, which while it means less state intervention, does not mean less government, as the mechanisms through which responsibilities and influence are mediated come from above. (Jessop, 1998, Raco & Imrie, 2000, Giddens, 1998)

2.2.4 Urban Regime Theory: How Does Power Reside in Multi-Sectoral Relationships of Local Governance?

"Urban regime theory," offers conceptualisation of the power that deals specifically with the interdependence of government and non- government actors in decision- making

and has been developed to explain the nature and balance of power in urban policy making. "Urban regime theory" originates from the United States and came into the fore in the study of urban politics from the mid 1980s onwards to make sense of the growth of public- private partnerships. The best-known application of "urban regime theory" is that devised by Stephen Elkin and Clarence Stone on their work of Dallas and Atlanta. "Urban regime theory" became popular in the UK because it began to ask questions about the implications of social complexity for politics. What the systemic advantage of certain interests implies for the nature of urban politics, the forms of power which dominate the modern system of urban governance and what role there is for democratic politics and disadvantaged groups (Stoker, 1995, Cochrane, 1999, Watson, 1999, Stoker & Mossberger, 1994, DiGaetano & Klemanski, 1993). For this thesis its relevance is how power is exercised in partnerships and coalitions.

"Urban regime theory" provides a new perspective on the issue of power as it directs attention away from a narrow focus on power as an issue of social control towards an understanding of power expressed through social production i.e. how certain interests blend their capacities to achieve common purposes. Therefore, what is important is not so much domination and subordination (i.e. power of coercion or "power over"), but a capacity to act, or the "power to" accomplish goals. In other words, the power to govern is the ability to produce certain desired policy results, not to dominate the mass of public. "Urban regime theory" identifies that the urban environment is complex and within it exists a web of relationships between a variety of governmental and non-governmental actors and institutions. Rather than urban decision making being hierarchical, it is fragmented. "Urban regime theory" assumes that as the task of government becomes more complex the effectiveness of local government depends on the co-operation of non- governmental actors and on the combination of state capacity with non- governmental resources. The point made by Stone (1991) cited in Stoker & Mossberger (1994) p197 is that "to be effective government must blend their capacities with those of various non government actors." This comes close to describing the stated aims of the government's community empowerment agenda.

Stone (1991) cited in Stoker & Mossberger (1994) p197 also points out "instead of the power to govern being something that can be captured by an electoral victory, it is something created by bringing co-operative actors together, not as equal claimants, but

often as unequal contributors to a shared set of purposes." Consequently, "urban regime theory" aims to understand the interdependence of governmental and non-governmental forces in meeting economic and social challenges and focuses attention on the problems of co-ordination and co-operation between them. Thus it is concerned with how in the midst of diversity and complexity a capacity to govern can emerge within a political system. In this sense, "Urban regime theory" is useful in highlighting "local politics," but does not have much to say about the particular politics of the third sector (Stone, 1993, Stone, 1980, Stone, 1988, Stoker, 1995, Stoker, 1998, DiGaetano & Klemanski, 1993).

Stone (1993) argues there are two conditions in the urban system: government institutions subject to a degree of popular control and the economy guided by privately controlled investment decisions. Consequently, an urban regime is a set of informal arrangements by which this division between the public and private sectors is bridged, allowing them to function together in order to make and carry out governing decisions i.e. the mediating "organism" is the regime. Thus Stone (1993) believes urban policies are shaped by three factors: (1) the composition of a community's governing coalition. (2) The nature of the relationships among members of the governing coalition and (3) the resources that the members bring to the governing coalition.

Stone (1993) identifies four regime types. The assumption is that leadership cohesion (i.e. civic co-operation) and organisational resources (i.e. financial and personnel commitments to economic development activities) will enhance governing capacity and that these are the most difficult to achieve. The four regime types include firstly, "maintenance regimes" (caretaker), which are interested in preserving the status quo. These regimes centre on the provision of routine services and only require periodic approval at the ballot box. Secondly, "development regimes" (business centred) that concentrate on changing land use in order to promote growth or counter decline. Thirdly, "middle class progressive regimes" (complex regulation), which concentrate on tailoring policy to favour certain groups and finally, "lower class, opportunity expansion regimes" (mobilisation), which seek to provide opportunities to the disadvantaged.

Box 2.1 illustrates that within these numerous regime types Stone (1993) identifies four different forms of power within the structure of urban decision-making and that different

stakeholders will have different contributions to make and different levels of resources to commit. Stakeholders with "systemic power" or resources associated with "command power" will be at an advantage, but in order to turn these advantages into "pre-emptive power" stakeholders have to manipulate their strategic position and control over resources into effective long-term coalitions that are able to guide policies towards social change. (Stone, 1980, Stone, 1988, Stoker, 1995)

Box 2.1: Stone's Power & Regime

Systemic Power:
(Similar to Lukes (1974) mobilisation of bias in the two-dimensional view of power)

This form of power is situational or positional. Certain interests will have inherent advantages due to their position in the "socio-economic structure." The private sector is seen as having a privileged position in policy making because of its control over investment decisions and resources that are essential for societal welfare. The private sector is thought to have such a privileged position that it may not need to act in order for its interests and concerns to be taken into account.

Command Power or Social Control Power:

This form of power is less positional and more active. It is the power to mobilise resources to gain dominance over other interests. Thus the emphasis is on one actor's capacity to achieve compliance and the other actor's capacity to resist (i.e. A gets B to do something B would not have otherwise done). However, it is important to note that "command power" only exists in a limited domain, largely because the skills, resources and time required to achieve "command power" is only available to certain interests in limited arenas.

Coalition or Bargaining Power:

The power to bargain from a position of strength, seeking to match complementary goals and resources.

Pre-emptive Power or Power of Social Production:

This is the capacity to occupy, hold and make use of the strategic position. "Pre-emptive power" is achieved via trust among stakeholders and a willingness to change for the benefit of the coalition rather than self-interest. This form of power is intentional and active.

2.2.5 Where do Voluntary and Community Sectors fit into these Models of Multi-sectoral Power Relationships?

Although, the original focus of "urban regime theory" was primarily on public and private sector stakeholders, the theory does recognise that other interests such as the VCS, as well as technical or professional officials maybe drawn into a regime. For example, the numerous regime typologies that have been produced all appear to have an implicit

community involvement element e.g. Stone's (1993) "lower class, opportunity expansion" (Smith & Beazley, 2000, Miller, 1999)

Urban regime theory's conceptualisation of power does provide a framework for understanding local processes of partnership arrangements. It accounts for factors such as the degree to which higher tiers of government and the public sector are able to exercise "command power" within partnerships. For example, partnerships tend to include representatives from the VCS regardless of whether they are appropriate partners because higher tiers of government demand it via stipulating the parameters within which partners operate through their funding requirements and guidelines. It also accounts for the lack of influence of the VCS, because these groups are clearly not endowed with the resources associated with either "command" or "systemic power" (Miller, 1999). In fact the level of resources third sector organisations require is likely to be so great that external funding is needed. Thus Stone (1993) states: "Given the needs they must meet, they may find co-ordinating resource allocation amongst themselves is not enough; they may also feel compelled to make concerted efforts to garner assistance from state government or other extra local sources." p21.

Therefore, it would seem that the experience of regime formation for third sector groups is one of limited power and influence, at least initially, until they gain experience and expertise. This tends to be built into the process and structures of regeneration, with Smith & Beazley (2000) arguing that in the UK the system of urban funding facilitates this process further. Finally, Smith & Beazley (2000) advocate that the challenge of building a governing coalition that has a third sector focus must consider not only resources, but also the nature of the community involvement. Thus they argue that "urban regime theory" can only provide part of the context within which community involvement in regeneration takes place.

"Urban regime theory" also has a number of limitations that need to be taken into account. Firstly, the original focus of "urban regime theory" was primarily on public and private sector stakeholders in a city context in the United States and not on the third sector at the local neighbourhood level in the UK. Thus this raises the question as to whether "urban regime theory" can be successfully transferred and appropriately used in the UK context, where there is little evidence of cities demonstrating individual

regimes, because policies are largely decided by national government. Secondly, although the theory does make some reference to other interests that maybe drawn into the regime, it sometimes appears as if the third sector has been “latched” on to “urban regime theory” as an after thought, particularly by some contemporary academics as the role of the third sector in regeneration has become more important. Frequently, “urban regime theory” appears to be used to explain third sector participation in regeneration simply because there is no theory currently devised specifically to explain the role and power of VCOs in regeneration.

2.3 The Third Sector, the Social Economy and Local Governance

2.3.1 The Third Sector and Local Governance

The emergence of a more networked form of governance has broken the traditional barriers between the public, private, voluntary and community sectors and has led to the development of a mixed or pluralist economy of service. This has ultimately given the third sector a greater role in the process. In effect, the third sector’s role has evolved from being typically on the receiving end of grants handed out by the statutory sector, to contracting with the statutory sector to provide certain services and now, to being partners in “community governance” (Deakin, 1995). These three types of relationships are categorised by Leach & Wilson (1998) as the “traditional,” the “instrumentalist” and the “participative democratic.” It is important to note that Leach & Wilson wrote this in 1998, therefore it might be argued that currently there is a shift back to the “instrumentalist” emphasis (to some degree). Certainly, there seems rather less emphasis now on the “participative democratic” element than there was a few years ago (See Box 2.2).

The current emphasis upon “participative democracy” is evident in a range of experiments designed to remedy the defects of the political representative system. These decentralised experiments that attempt to create more deliberative forms of engagement and direct democracy include: encouraging participation through the involvement of organised community groups in service delivery, or through individual citizens, via citizen juries; citizen panels; community forums; visioning exercises; focus groups designed to test out particular issues with small groups; community plans;

needs analyses; deliberative opinion polls; community elections and Internet and tele-democracy experiments (Warburton, 2000, NEF, 1998, Lowndes & Wilson, 2001). These have been supplemented with more general participatory techniques to stimulate user involvement, including referenda, the involvement of users in policy implementation and experiments to improve electoral turnout (LGA, 2001, Stewart, 2000). There has also been a greater use of more traditional instruments such as opinion polls.

Box 2.2: The Changing Role of the Third Sector in Local Governance

Source: Leach & Wilson (1998) p 8-9.

Traditional/ Incremental

The "Traditional" relationship consists of local authorities that have chosen to support a limited range of VCOs and continue to do so through tradition and precedent rather than as an expression of a more explicit view of their value.

Instrumentalist/ Value for Money

The "Instrumentalist" relationship consists of local authorities, which see VCOs primarily as external agencies that have the potential for providing services for which the local authority has statutory responsibility. Here the VCOs are valued partners in so far as they can provide better value for money alternatives to service provision by the local authority itself.

Participative Democratic Ethos

In the "Participative Democratic" relationship there is a perceived value in the very existence of third sector organisations and they are seen as an essential element of the participative ethos that local authorities are attempting to encourage and develop. Here the capacity of the third sector to provide services is a secondary consideration. Third sector organisations in the "participative democratic" regime are supported because local authorities value what they are trying to do in terms of community representation and development.

The greater emphasis placed on involving non- government actors within policies has certainly given the third sector a more substantial role in the governance process, as partnership working with the third sector is now seen in the context of fulfilling a range of functions. These include fostering and supporting citizen participation, developing more responsive policies and mobilising community support around particular initiatives. The "modernising local government" agenda emphasises the importance of meaningful engagement with the third sector, if effective policies are to be developed and implemented and as a result national and local compacts with the voluntary sector have been set up in England, Scotland and Wales (Craig *et al*, 1999, Morison, 2000). This "modernising local government" agenda largely stemmed from citizen dissatisfaction with government outputs and their cynicism of politicians, together with their greater willingness to participate in unconventional forms of political behaviour, such as interest groups and associations that are often rooted within the third sector

(Leach & Percy-Smith, 2001, John, 2001, Pierre, 1998, John, 1997). Rosenau (1992: p291) goes even further to argue that governance has actually empowered citizens to engage in such activities. As he states: "given a world where governance is increasingly operative without government, where lines of authority are increasingly more informal than formal, where legitimacy is increasingly marked by ambiguity, citizens are increasingly capable of holding their own by knowing when, where and how to engage in collective action."

In contrast, Williams (2002a, 2002b, 2003a, 2003b) criticises policy for being too focussed on VCS (i.e. the third sector approach) and introduces a "fourth sector" approach of "one- to- one mutuality" or "mutual aid." Williams (2003a) states the Policy Action Team Report Number 9: Community Self- Help by the Home Office (1999) clearly depicts how the "third sector" approach of developing community based groups is viewed as the principal means of developing the community sector and community participation. However, data (such as the 2000 General Household Survey and the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey) reveals that this policy focus cultivates a culture of engagement, which is unfamiliar to the vast majority of the population and one, which is currently more prevalent in affluent neighbourhoods. To foster community engagement in a manner that builds upon a participatory culture already prevalent in deprived neighbourhoods, rather than parachuting in a foreign approach, Williams (2002a) advocates that a policy re- orientation is required. Consequently, Williams (2002a, 2002b, 2003a, 2003b) advocates a "*fourth sector*" route that further seeks to cultivate acts of "*one- to- one reciprocity*." This "*fourth sector*" approach to community engagement is thought to be possible by policy initiatives such as LETs, time banks and employee mutuals.

2.3.2 Local Democracy, Representation & Accountability for the Third Sector

At the micro level of local governance the selection and representation of third sector partners is an important issue because of the very nature of the sector itself. VCS partners in regeneration partnerships are the ones where the issue of selection arises most, since the local authority must be involved in partnerships, the private sector has a different ethos towards partnership working and can choose to become involved (see

systemic power of urban regime theory), where as the VCS may want to be involved in a partnership, but may not be chosen, invited or judged reliable or appropriate.

There is currently a gap in academic research and government guidance on how partnerships should, and actually do, go about selecting VCS partners, but as Wilson & Charlton (1997) state:

"At a very early stage in the development process, those who originally conceived the notion of the partnership will need to decide which individuals and organisations should be involved in the initiative. There are no universal rules on this matter, but there must be some general guidelines that need to be observed in selecting partners." **Wilson & Charlton (1997) p22**

Despite this, many urban regeneration partnerships select VCS partners on an *ad hoc* basis. Even in areas where some partners are self-selecting, there are still choices to be made about which organisations from within a sector or interest group to bring on board. In the limited literature that exists Russell *et al* (1996) cited in Taylor (1997) argue that the selection of third sector partners in partnerships depends on the visibility, strategic position and reputation of the potential players. It is the larger groups (the second tier umbrella bodies) who are the most likely to be chosen because they are known to statutory partners, have the resources to participate and can sometimes have assets to trade (Bailey, 2003). This has led Skelcher *et al* (1996) to state "investment of money seems once more to carry greater weight for determining who has a voice than time, intellect or commitment of people." p22. Small self-help groups are bypassed as potential partners because they are vulnerable to the loss of personnel, they may not have any paid workers or an office base at which they can be contacted, and their involvement may ebb and flow.

In terms of third sector representativeness and accountability within partnerships, the sheer diversity of the third sector makes it hard to know if the key actors are representative of the "community of interest" or "community of place" that a partnership is to serve. This is because the local authorities often seek to identify a single spokesperson to represent users views in all contexts, assuming a consensus of interests (Morphet, 2008). Mayo (1997) terms this as the "godfather approach." This raises considerable difficulties concerning accountability, given the problems of keeping the "godfather" accountable to the full range of interests he/she is supposed to represent. The lack of time available to build trust and social capital within partnerships

can also pull those engaged in the process (the godfathers) away from the rest of the community that they represent (i.e. they are divorced from their constituency) (Bailey, 2003, Taylor, 1997, Taylor, 2000, Osborne, 1998, Prior *et al*, 1995, Hastings *et al*, 1996). There is also a tendency for this “godfather” role to be confined to those already known to public bodies: “the usual suspects who hit the ground running.” This causes those that are involved to feel the burden – “always left to the committed few” and those that are not involved to feel debarred from involvement. (Carley *et al*, 2000, p16, Morphet, 2008).

Third sector partners are also frequently unrepresentative of the communities they serve because they only have access to fragments of the community, as a result of their limited social networks. This can often lead to the replication of social exclusion patterns that regeneration partnerships are intended to tackle. In addition, third sector organisations are often stereotyped as being less accountable in terms of representation, financial management and service delivery than more established organisations of local governance (Atkinson, 2007). Despite third sector representatives being accountable to citizens in the neighbourhood, arrangements for reporting back to the local community and information distribution mechanisms are often weak (Bailey, 2003). Feedback to the community is a huge burden to an individual third sector representative, requiring a range of time-consuming tasks (such as attending meetings, translating key decisions into community languages, producing leaflets and distributing these leaflets. Feedback to the community is also heavily dependent on community members attending public meetings, which means that at best third sector representatives are accountable to community activists and at worst paid workers of the VCS, rather than local residents (Purdue *et al*, 2000, Warburton, 1998).

Skelcher (2000) also states that the differing status of partnership board members also raises questions of accountability. For example, Skelcher (2000: 17) identified “board members who were there as representatives concerned to advance the broad interest of their agency, but with considerable discretion on the position they took, delegates with a mandate, people elected by a particular constituency and those who were independent members.” This illustrates how different forms and levels of accountability pertain to different board members in the same partnership. Lowndes (1999) cited in Blakeley (2003:8) also states that because the legitimacy of each representative often

comes from a different source; the different mandates are not always mutually recognised and valued. For example, elected representatives often question community representatives' participation because they are perceived to be lacking representativeness and democratic legitimacy.

2.3.3 Power Relations and the Third Sector

It can be seen from this chapter that for most observers, the most powerful partner still controls the rules of engagement i.e. the "accountable body" or lead agency, usually a local government agency (Morphet, 2008). This has led some authors to consider partnerships as a "one way street, built on power and not trust" (Purdue, 2007, p139). Lead organisations decide the way the multi- sectoral relationship is constituted, the sub committees and working groups it has, who will be represented and at what level, and how the local community will be represented. The structure of a partnership tends to mirror that of the local authority since they are usually the "accountable body" with committees, sub committees, issue based working groups, based on professional and technical cultures rather than the more informal and participative cultures of the third sector and the community (Purdue, 2007). Targets and performance criteria are imposed by central government and interpreted through local authorities as the "accountable bodies." Third sector organisations are rarely given the opportunity to devise bottom-up criteria for monitoring and evaluation (Forrest & Kearns, 1999, Taylor, 1995, Burns & Taylor, 2000).

This imbalance of power within partnerships creates an observable hierarchy of partners. The "accountable body" has more power in the relationship than other partners. This role tends to be evenly carved up between local authorities and "quangos," and/or "para- state bodies" while the power of VCOs is marginal: they are peripheral insiders often unable to influence central issues. VCS representatives have few sanctions, except the threat of withdrawal and once this card has been played there is little more they can do. This has led to VCS representatives feeling undervalued because they are not given the same status in discussions; and decisions are often rubber-stamped at the upper tiers of partnerships, out of the influence of the community. Often decisions are made before the meetings, "directing" democracy towards a certain course of action, which favours the elite group. (Bailey, 2003, Nevin &

Shiner, 1995, Taylor, 1997a, Oatley, 1998, Tilson *et al*, 1997, Hall, 2000, Taylor, 1995, Hastings *et al*, 1996)

The lack of power third sector groups have within city politics can be attributed to a range of issues. In the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) study cited in Westall (2000) the unequal balance of power is attributed to the way in which the local authority perceives third sector organisations. When local authorities were asked how they saw the voluntary sector during the year 2000, 44% of the local authorities saw the voluntary sector as unprofessional experts needing local authority support, with only 34% perceiving them as equal partners. 15% saw the sector as amateurs needing extensive local authority support and only 8% saw them as professional experts.

Other reasons for the lack of power third sector groups have within partnerships include their lack of financial and personnel resources, a factor noted within Stone's (1993) work on urban regimes. Third sector groups rarely bring financial assets to the partnership table and are often labelled as the problem that needs to be solved, rather than concentrating on the knowledge / human capital that community groups can offer. The low priority given to third sector involvement by leading stakeholders and the different cultures and philosophies in their methods of working also ensures their power in local governance is limited (Taylor, 2000a, McArthur, 1995, Hall, 2000, Purdue, 2001, Duffy & Hutchinson, 1997, Tilson *et al*, 1997). It would seem that the cultural differences between third sector partners and statutory agencies tend to be seen as a problem to be contained rather than as an opportunity, and containment usually involves adopting the culture of the lead partner, which is often the local authority (Morphet, 2008, Purdue, 2007). Skelcher *et al* (1996) quote a third sector representative who stated: "In all the work I've been involved in, it's us who have had to put the effort into reaching the Council's level... They never come down to ours." p24.

The lack of power third sector groups have within partnerships of local governance can also be attributed to the fact that the decision making processes i.e. the "mentalities of government" or the "technologies of government," are often unfamiliar to third sector groups. This is because they are based on bureaucratic procedures, involve the consumption of lengthy reports that are alien to the third sector and the jargon and technical language used can also cause problems. In Taylor's (1997) study, several interviewees from the voluntary sector suggested that during initial discussions, they

felt they were entering uncharted grounds, whilst for others in the initiative it was familiar territory. Taylor (1997) goes on to suggest that by the time voluntary and community sector representatives “get up to speed,” key decisions have been taken, with targets and outputs already laid down and the scope for influence already limited.

Third sector partners can also find partnership meetings intimidating and feel ill at ease with the proceedings. For example, a community representative in the Hastings *et al* (1996) study stated: “with so many men in suits, it was difficult to find the courage to speak up. Sometimes, you went along determined to say something this time, but somehow the meeting would be over and you wouldn’t have opened your mouth.” p22. In addition to these problems, most other partners are in a position to deliver on behalf of their constituency and therefore, fail to understand the need of third sector representatives to go back and consult with their communities.

The limited power third sector partners have in partnerships of local governance can be further demonstrated by the fact that VCOs tend to be consulted late on in the partnership process, when the remit and strategy of the bid has already been established. Consequently, the involvement of the VCS is often at the operational/ implementation stage rather than at the strategic level (Purdue, 2007). This is termed by Mayo (1997) as the “puppet show approach” as they are responding to initiatives rather than being involved in the agenda setting. In extreme cases involvement may be no more than a signature on a final submission bid, in order to validate the bid. This is because the short time scales of initiatives can prevent links being established with potential third sector partners, resulting in exclusion or inclusion by name only (Purdue, 2007). The exclusion of VCS groups at the beginning of programmes can lead to the wrong issues being prioritised and resources being misguided and wasted. In contrast, it is advocated by Hastings *et al* (1996) that third sector participants are often involved fully in the formal parts of a partnership initiative, such as board meetings or working groups. But third sector partners frequently are not involved in the work that is done informally, “behind the scenes,” by partners negotiating between their different objectives on a one-to-one basis, what Purdue (2007) refers to as the “local authorities secretive organisational culture.” By not being involved in these important informal arenas, it inevitably limits the scale of their influence (Ward, 1997, Duffy & Hutchinson, 1997, Hutchinson, 1994, Taylor, 1997a, Hastings *et al*, 1996, Diamond, 2001).

Despite the government's belief that the best way to achieve "community governance" is through long term self-sustaining partnerships or where regimes give the community a sense of ownership and control in regeneration and its outcomes, in most partnerships consultation is controlled by the decision makers. VCS partners are normally consulted, but only on options that have been carefully constructed by those with power (i.e. power is "exercised" and not "possessed"). In some cases third sector participation can amount to lip service only (i.e. participation amounts to insincerity) (Burns & Taylor, 2000, Bailey, 1990, McArthur, 1995, McArthur, 1993, Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998).

2.4 Powers, Third Sector and Urban Renewal: Towards a Framework

So far, this chapter discussion has considered notions that not only is power moving "downwards" and "outwards" to include the VCS, but also is simultaneously moving "upwards" to government institutions, illustrating the co-existence of centralisation and decentralisation. At the local or neighbourhood level citizens can play different roles, draw on different resources and have their participation affected by a lack of capacity (social capital) and/ or prevailing power relationships.

We have also seen that the notion of the third sector and its role in regeneration emerges from a number of ideological and political roots, most of which draw attention to power relationships and the capacity for such organisations to act. Central to these debates are which types or forms of power are most important in the neighbourhood renewal and modernising local government agenda, and in addition, how this theoretical discussion can be drawn together to create a framework or starting point to translate these ideas through and shape the study. Consequently, I now turn to the theories of power discussed earlier in this chapter and consider their significance in the local government and local governance agenda and how they have assisted in the generation of the research questions for this study on local governance, community participation and regeneration.

Weber's notion of "power as possessed" is important in the neighbourhood renewal and modernising local government agenda because here power is seen as direct, observable actions of governing bodies and visible relationships through which people

wield their legitimate powers. This raises a number of basic questions for the third sector: who determines the rules of the partnership? What is the balance of power within the partnership? Where in the process are communities involved and at what level and who benefits from participation? (see Table 2.7)

Foucault's ideas of "governmentality" and "power as exercised" are important because "governmentality" provides a conceptual tool to allow us to examine issues such as community subjectives, the strategies, tactics and techniques of government, the changing nature of welfare state systems and conceptions of citizen's rights and responsibilities in contemporary society. As Raco (2003) stated: "Notions of "governmentality" give us real insights into the logic of neo- liberal governance (or advanced liberalism) and can help to explain what it is that regimes, such as the "third way" agenda of the New Labour administration, are seeking to achieve with their programmes of welfare reform, law and order strategies and economic policies. It also critically gives us new conceptual and practical tools that enable us to develop alternative agendas and ways of thinking."

The use of the notion of "governmentality" in the context of "community governance" presents an original contribution because there has been limited application of Foucauldian perspectives to examine contemporary regeneration issues, such as power relationships within partnerships. Foucault's notion of "power as exercised" is also important because it indicates power is indirect, working through practices internalised by individuals who bring themselves into line (i.e. self regulation). This raises a number of basic questions for the third sector: How is power exercised and through what means? How effective is participatory decision- making? How much influence do communities have? What is the expected and actual contribution/ role of the third sector and how does power circulate through a partnership's organisational practices? (see Table 2.7)

Table 2.7: Piecing Together a Weberian & Foucauldian Approach to Power

	Questions	Theoretical Claims	Evidence	Questions Raises for Third Sector
Weber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who holds power? Who controls the rule-making machinery? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domination by authority involves the imposition of rule-bound constraints on the context of others. Bureaucratic power is rational, top-down affair with clearly defined lines of authority and delegation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The visible actions of governing bodies. The forms of expertise and institutional authority drawn upon. The rule making process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who has determined the rules of the partnership? What is the balance of power within the partnership? Where in the process are communities involved & at what level? What investment is made in developing & sustaining community participation? Who benefits from participation? What barriers are there to participation?
Foucault	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is power exercised? How does power circulate? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domination works on the basis of self-resistant rather than external constraint. People bring themselves to order. Power is proactive; it is brought to bear on people's actions, closing down rather than opening up possibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The indirect techniques and practices, which routinely "govern" our lives. The ideas and accepted "truths" which influence our behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much influence & control do communities have? How strong is the leadership within partnerships for community participation? How effective is participatory decision-making? What is the expected contribution of the third sector? How does the third sector see their role (multiple views)?

Table 2.8: Lukes (1974) Three Dimensions of Power & the Third Sector

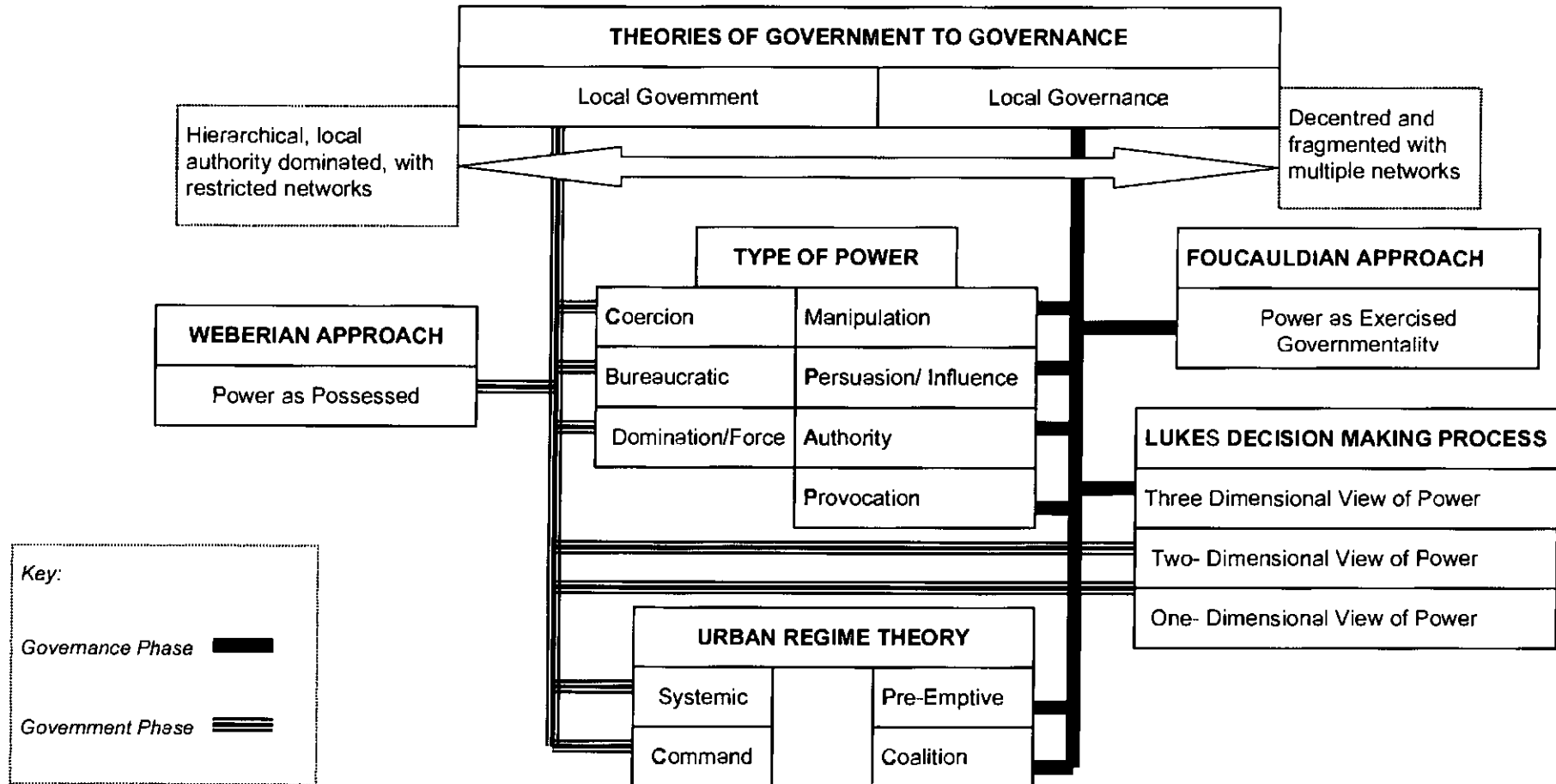
The Three Dimensions of Power	Description	Examples
The One Dimensional View	Focuses on whose views prevailed in decision- making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In urban regeneration partnerships the Accountable Body's views prevail in the decision-making process. They decide the way the multi-sectoral relationship is constituted, who will be represented and at what level.
The Two Dimensional View	Involves examining both decision-making and non- decision-making. This dimension of power recognises that non- decision making may also be an exercise of power, as failure or refusal to act may be evidence of inequalities of power.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "Mobilisation of bias" in regeneration partnerships strongly favours the public sector. While the third sector lacks the financial and personnel resources required to effectively participate. • A third sector partner may fail to act because they anticipate the Accountable Body's reaction.
The Three Dimensional View	Ability to control the political agenda by the ability to manipulate people's needs and preferences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCOs tend to be consulted only on options that have been carefully constructed by those with power. • The third sector may have grievances with other partnership members over the decision- making process, but they are covert and thus result in latent conflict.

Lukes (1974) "three dimensions of power" are also important to this study because they show many similarities to the Weberian and Foucauldian approaches to power, particularly the distinction between observable and indirect power. For example, the "one- dimensional view of power" is much the same as Weber's "power as possessed" as it focuses on who prevails in decision making, where there is observable conflict (i.e. actual, concrete observable behaviour), thus raising similar questions for the third sector as Weber's work does. The "two-dimensional view of power" refers to the "mobilisation of bias," similar to urban regime theory's "systemic power," and raises a number of questions: Does the third sector engage in non- decision making and is the third sector affected by the "mobilisation of bias" (see Table 2.8) The "three-

dimensional view of power” has elements of the Foucauldian approach as this dimension is concerned with how potential issues are kept out of politics whether through institutional practices or through individual decisions (i.e. self governing and the techniques of government). This dimension is also important because it raises the issue that power is not only exercised in situations of conflict. This raises questions as to whether multi- sectoral relationships are always conflictual and can power struggles always be identified.

“Urban regime theory” is useful to this study in that though its emphasis upon local politics and interests, it focuses attention upon questions relating to the nature of the relationship between partners, the composition of the partnership, the resources partners bring to the partnership, and most importantly, what the systemic advantage of certain interests implies for the nature of regeneration and the forms of power that dominate the modern system of governance. Urban regime theory’s conceptualisation of power also provides a framework for understanding local processes of partnership arrangements as it accounts for the lack of influence of the VCS by illustrating these groups are not endowed with the resources associated with either “systemic” or “command power.”

Figure 2.2: Connections with Power and Phases towards Governance Model



The varying “modes of power” identified in Table 2.3 can be used as a means to think about those “modes of power” which dominated the local government phase and the subsequent shift towards local governance. Links can also be made with the “modes of power” in the local government phase (coercion, domination and bureaucratic power) with Weber’s “power as possessed,” whilst the “modes of power,” which characterise the local governance phase (manipulation, persuasion, authority and provocation) appear particularly linked to Foucault’s “power as exercised” and Lukes “three-dimensional power.” These links are demonstrated in Figure 2.2.

To summarise Figure 2.2 shows the links and similarities between the theories of power covered in this chapter. This theoretical framework, which draws upon the ideas of Weber, Foucault and Lukes is used in the thesis as a source of questions, which were used to guide data collection and interpretation. It is the intention of the next chapter to show how this theoretical framework contributes substantially to the creation of the research questions around which the thesis is organised and influences the choice of methodological approaches taken to answering these questions.

CHAPTER 3 THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

3. INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on “community participation” in urban regeneration decision making processes taking place in the North London sub region: an area with significant socio- economic problems that has been the object of an array of urban regeneration initiatives. The research questions, which underpin this thesis, are addressed using a five stage methodological process. The research process goes from the theory of community participation to the practice of urban regeneration. The ultimate aim is to examine how theory (ideologies and ideas) are converted into practicable policies and the inevitable “warping” of these as part of the implementation process in a specific spatial- temporal setting, which shapes the inherent power imbalance between different sectoral stakeholders.

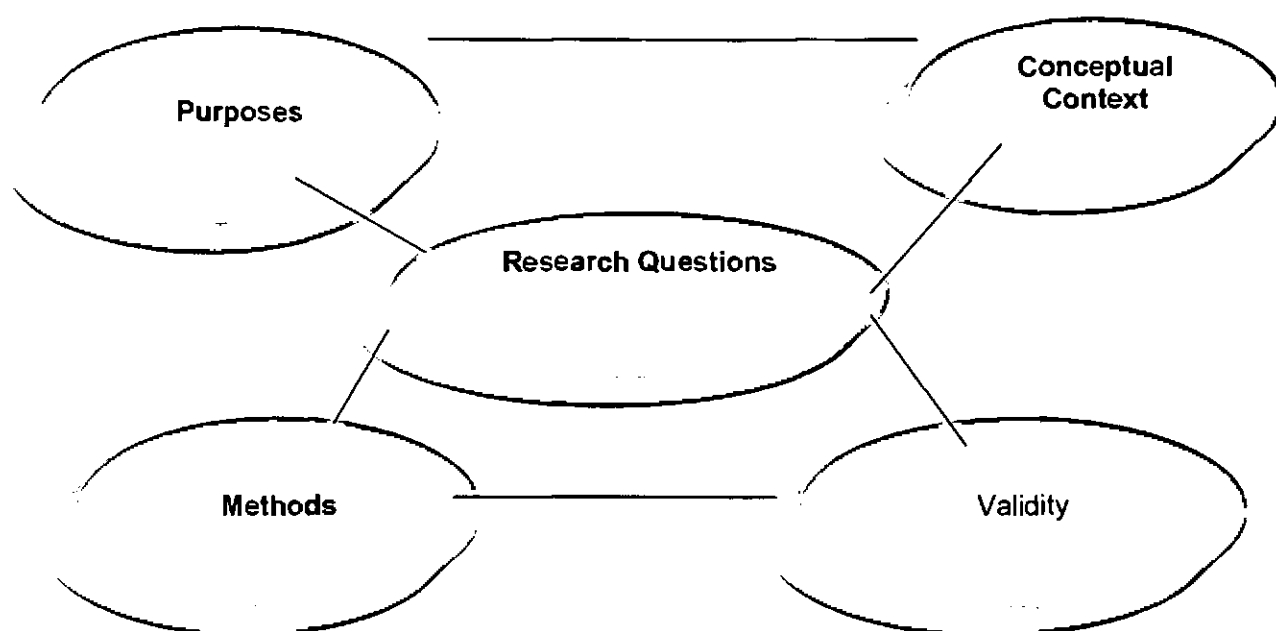
I draw upon Maxwell's (1996) model of qualitative research design, which illustrates the interactive nature of the relationship among the key design elements in order to describe the research design of this study and its evolution. Maxwell's (1996) model comprises five components that make up the underlying structure guiding qualitative research and the interactive process between them: purposes, conceptual context, research questions, methods and validity. Perhaps most importantly Maxwell's model of research stresses the need for the design framework to be flexible. This is because the research design in qualitative research is an iterative process that involves “tacking” (Geertz, 1976, p235) back and forth between these different components of the design, assessing the implications for each as changes take place as the research proceeds.

Figure 3.1 presents the relationship between the five components of a qualitative research design as an hourglass with the lines between the components representing the most important two- way ties of influence/ implication. The upper triangle of the model is the “external” aspect of the design (i.e. it includes the goals, experiences, knowledge, assumptions and theory to the study and its design). For example, the research questions have a clear relationship to the purpose of this study and are informed by what is already known about power, the third sector and urban renewal (i.e. the theoretical tools). Simultaneously, the purposes of this study are informed by the relevant theoretical literature, while the choice of relevant theory and knowledge

depends on both the purposes and the research questions (Maxwell, 1996). The research questions are the centre of the model as they connect the two halves of the design and inform all the other components. The bottom triangle of the model is the “internal” aspect of the design (i.e. it includes the actual activities that are carried out and the processes that it goes through to develop and test conclusions). The research methods adopted enable the research questions to be answered and for plausible “validity threats” to the answers to the research questions to be addressed (Maxwell, 1996).

Figure 3.1: Interactive Research Design

Source: Maxwell (1996) pp4-5



The aim of this chapter is to firstly, address the purpose of researching power relations in the regeneration process. Secondly, to devise a framework from the theoretical literature (conceptual framework) reviewed in Chapter 2. A closer look is then taken at the thesis’ research questions in order to identify the reasons behind such questioning and the implications this has on the choice of data collection methods and analysis. Thirdly, it aims to discuss the qualitative research approach that has been adopted to study power relations in the regeneration process. This includes a review of national policy documents in order to understand how “power is possessed” and empirical case study fieldwork, entailing participant observation, questionnaires, semi- structured interviews and the collection of local documentary material in order to understand how “power is exercised” on the ground. Here the usefulness of each of these research

methods to the study and their generic strengths and weaknesses will be reviewed. In addition, information regarding the study area will be documented, which will include the nature of the research participants and sampling decisions. Finally, the techniques of analysis for each research method (policy documents, participant observation, questionnaires and semi- structured interviews) will be reviewed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of validity threats and ethical considerations in the empirical work.

3.1 Purpose of Researching Power Relations in the Regeneration Process

Good governance is based in part, on clear links and communication routes between the governed and those taking decisions on their behalf. There are a number of ways in which these mechanisms for dialogue can be encouraged. These range from ensuring that the governing bodies are representative of the constituencies, to the establishment of a variety of participation mechanisms outside of the formal structures. However, for this to be achieved decision- making must be informed by the experience, views and aspirations of all community stakeholders. In reality, it is evident that some voices are heard above others, through a complex and somewhat invisible mix of factors. Despite these clear results the mechanisms of power, the dynamics of influence and the perpetuation of the “status quo” are more difficult to unravel and have therefore, often been ignored in the literature. Consequently, the ultimate goal of this study is driven by my political passion to explore the situation that currently exists in this new wave of local governance, whereby the unequal balance of power between statutory organisations and the third sector in urban regeneration and local government decision making is accepted as given, and the mechanisms at work overlooked.

The issues this research is intended to illuminate, and the practices it will influence, include the need to better understand:

- The nature of the power relationships, which exist between statutory organisations and the third sector in urban regeneration decision making, as well as why this imbalance of power happens.
- The types or modes of power that manifest themselves in these relationships

- Why some groups are consistently not “at the table” and others disproportionately represented
- How to unlock the potential of groups who are actively contributing to their communities, but are not able to influence decision- making or access positions of authority.
- The meanings local actors attach to the terms “community” and “community participation” and how they interpret these meanings into practice, since this will ultimately affect the level/ types of power that the third sector is given in urban regeneration decision- making processes.
- The history and patterns of “community participation” so as to identify how past practices between the statutory organisations and the third sector influence the contemporary situation.
- The barriers that prevent third sector organisations effectively participating in urban regeneration decision- making (e.g. practical, cultural, knowledge barriers etc.), because there are power dimensions to each of these barriers.
- The significant differences of motivation and expectation between communities in relation to governance and influence

This research also has a practical or policy purpose. This is because by accomplishing a better understanding of the nature of the power imbalances that exist between the statutory organisations and the third sector in urban regeneration decision making processes, the changes required for more effective “community participation” in the policy process can be identified, and more appropriate solutions will be able to be proposed. Therefore, this research will meet a valuable need in the regeneration arena for practitioners, local government officials, third sector representatives and community consultants.

A predominantly qualitative approach is necessary for this study because it is concerned with the ways in which the third sector respond to the external realities of power at the micro- level. This research looks at the way in which respondents knowledge, action and consciousness help them to redefine the situation or constraints, to accommodate themselves in the policy process (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2001).

Consequently, the nature of the research purposes has determined the choice of a qualitative research design as the most appropriate to accommodate such analysis. Qualitative research is traditionally used to understand meanings that respondents give to events, situations and actions they are involved in. Meanings are mediated mainly through language and actions and reside in social practices; therefore the qualitative research methods adopted include those, which address both language and actions (Bryman, 2001). Qualitative methodology employs a research procedure that produces descriptive data; presented in the respondents' own words their views and experiences. It aims to understand people, not to measure them, allowing the researcher to get close to the respondent's experiences, feelings, attitudes, values and opinions. Researching people in their natural settings also provides a deeper understanding and a more realistic view of a respondent's world. Qualitative methodology also gives the researcher the flexibility to adapt the inquiry as their understanding in the field deepens. Respondents are not reduced to variables, but are seen as parts of the whole process, even an ongoing and incomplete process. Reducing people to numerical symbols and statistical figures (as in the quantitative approach) results in the loss of a perception of the subjective and unfinished nature of human behaviour (Bryman, 2001, May, 2001, Sarantakos, 1998, May, 2001, Hakim, 2000).

Firstly, I wanted to be able to understand the meanings that third sector and statutory organisations assign to events, situations and actions that take place as part of the operation of Community Empowerment Networks and Local Strategic Partnerships and the accounts that they give of these experiences. By studying events such as these I was able to see how third sector and statutory organisations behave and make sense of their interactions and how their understandings and experience influence their behaviour. Secondly, an understanding of the context within which the third sector and statutory organisations act and the influence that Community Empowerment Networks and Local Strategic Partnerships have on their actions was important, as by doing this, one was able to understand how actions, meanings and events were shaped by the unique time and place specific circumstances in which they occurred.

Thirdly, this research was concerned with "local causality" explanations, also known as "process theory" (Mohr, 1982) or "case orientated methods" (Ragin, 1987), i.e. the actual events, and the processes of decision making at these events that led to specific outcomes. The inductive and exploratory nature of qualitative research also provided

me with the opportunity to identify unanticipated influences of these power relationships. Considering the complexity of the issues raised by community participation and its implementation in urban regeneration it was essential to adopt a research approach that allowed for exploration of unanticipated factors in an evolving and dynamic political process.

Despite the strengths of a qualitative approach to research there is a need to be aware of the inherent limitations of utilising this method of inquiry. For example, the subjectivity of qualitative methodology can reduce the reliability of the data. Qualitative data are also criticised for lack of representativeness and generalisability of findings. In addition, it is often difficult for the researcher to remain detached from their respondents, as they enter the personal sphere of their subjects. Finally, qualitative research is very time consuming and there is a risk of collecting meaningless and useless information (Bryman, 2001, May, 2001, Sarantakos, 1998, Robson, 1993).

3.2 Conceptual Context/ Theoretical Framework

The systems of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that support and inform this study include my own experimental knowledge, existing theory and research, pilot and exploratory research.

3.2.1 Own Experimental Knowledge and Existing Research

My previous research work in the field of urban regeneration identified a series of interlocking tensions that are created by involving the third sector within partnership working. Four main tensions appeared particularly significant: why third sector partners are involved in partnerships, the balance of power within partnerships, the capacity of the third sector; and representational and accountability issues, including the selection process of the third sector partners. I also have experience of being a recipient of services provided by a voluntary sector organisation which has made me aware of the real understanding of community needs that such organisations can offer, and of the political difficulties they face in sustaining the services they provide without assistance from government agencies.

3.2.2 Pilot and Exploratory Research

Preliminary work consisted of a scoping study of the participatory mechanisms in operation in the North London sub region, which entailed unstructured interviews and telephone interviews (see later in this chapter for further details). The scoping study, which was later reinforced by the review of urban regeneration policy documents (see Chapter 4) revealed:

- There are conditions or issues of empowerment (local authority v community)
- It is unclear what is meant by “community involvement,” even among the actors/ agencies involved.
- There is evidence of devolution and centralisation simultaneously
- Community involvement is seen as intrinsically a “good” thing by most of those locally engaged in urban regeneration.
- More is expected of deprived neighbourhoods than affluent neighbourhoods in terms of community involvement
- Theory and practice contradictions are apparent

3.3 Research Questions

Taking the research questions outlined in Chapter 1, it is possible to use the “Method Matrix” in order to identify the reasons behind such questioning and the implications this has on the choice of data collection methods and analysis (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Connections between Research Questions, Methods and Modes of Analysis

What do I need to know?	Why do I need to know this?	What kind of data will answer these questions?	What kind of analysis will be adopted?
How is the third sector conceptualised in local governance?	To know how these terms link together	Literature review of theoretical discourse	Conceptual
<p>What is the nature and extent of voluntary and community sector participation in urban regeneration policy?</p> <p>How and why has voluntary and community sector participation evolved in the urban regeneration arena?</p> <p>What are the contrasting discourses (and definitions) of the "voluntary and community sector," and "community involvement" that underpins urban policy?</p> <p>What are the intellectual and practical contradictions of the emerging urban policy framework?</p>	To identify how conception of key terms contributes to levels of power	Review of policy documents	Conceptual and discourse
<p>With reference to the Community Empowerment Networks (CENs) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in Enfield and Haringey:</p> <p>How is the strategic infrastructure of the CENs created and established?</p> <p>How are agendas and priorities of the community set and how much influence do VCOs have in this process?</p> <p>Who "actively" participates in CENs and who does not and why?</p> <p>Does the competence/ capabilities of community representatives contribute to their level of power in the decision making process?</p> <p>How do VCOs see their new roles in service delivery developing and what are the dangers?</p>	To identify power dimensions to participation	Participant observations, questionnaire and semi- structured interviews	Conceptual and contextual
<p>With reference to the Community Empowerment Networks (CENs) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in Enfield and Haringey:</p> <p>How do local conditions (local political subcultures) influence and affect the evolution of CENs?</p> <p>How do these local political cultures relate to ongoing "discourses" of local governance/ politics (agonistic debate)?</p>	To identify the importance of local conditions to participation	Semi structured interviews and theoretical discourse	Conceptual and contextual

3.4 Research Methods: A Five- Stage Process

The methodology is a “staged sequence” of complementary approaches to gathering and interpreting the evidence needed to answer the research questions (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Summary of the Five Stage Research Methods Process

Stage	Research Method	Explanation
1	Review of policy documents	Conceptualisations of key terms contributes to levels of power, particularly positional and functional power which is possessed
2	Scoping Study	To provide background information on the participatory mechanisms in operation, to identify the issues that are linked to community participation, to present the research to potential respondents and the feasibility of researching them
3	Participant Observation	To truly understand the exercise of power it must be experienced first hand. Rapport needs to be established over a period of time with third sector organisations before they will co-operate, because they are often suspicious of researchers because of the lack of sensitivity that is often given towards community politics.
4	Questionnaires	To provide baseline data that does not currently exist in the two case study areas on voluntary and community organisations and the effectiveness of Community Empowerment Networks. To provide a sampling frame for semi – structured interviews participants To open new theoretical perspectives
5	Semi structured Interviews	Obtain further in-depth data on the exercise of power from key players Assess process of participation agenda in specific time/place settings

3.4.1 Stage 1: Review of Policy Documents

The first way in which this thesis looked at power was through the discourse of language (see Chapter 4). This involved looking at how ideas of “community participation” were constructed in the urban regeneration policy agenda (i.e. the ways in which people, namely government and institutions talked about, thought about, represented and used the term community involvement). The review of policy documents allowed the identification of how policy translated on the ground because the role of language in the policy process is the medium through which policy issues and processes are shaped and ultimately social reality is constructed. In addition,

examining discourses of “community” helped to expose who were the “insiders” and who were “outsiders” in the urban regeneration policy process. Words and phrases such as “community participation,” “community” and the “voluntary sector” have meanings that are organised into “Discursive practices” (systems and institutions) which connect meaning, power and knowledge together. Therefore, indicating that the different sectoral stakeholders are drawn into relations of power as they construct meanings, which in turn makes them who they are (Foucault, 1980, Parker, 1999, Macdonell, 1986, Wood & Kroger, 2000).

When carrying out the review of policy documents in Chapter 4 three key aspects of language are focussed upon “contradiction,” “construction,” and “practice” (see Box 3.1). It is important to note that my position as the researcher was equally important to this process because essentially I became part of the text and had to take responsibility for my own activity in the construction of meaning that I assigned to such terms.

Box 3.1 Key aspects of Language in Critical Text Work **Source: Parker (1999) pp6-7**

Contradiction – The different meanings that are at work in the text

- Dominant meanings of concepts (part of ideology/ thought).
- Subordinate meanings of concepts (resistance)

Construction – The way in which meanings are socially constructed.

Practice – The contradictory systems of meaning in practice

- The political functions of texts - When people struggle to make sense of texts people push at the limits of what is socially constructed and actively construct something different.

Several key ideas surrounding “discourse” inform the analysis adopted in Chapter 4. Firstly, models of discourses of “community” identified by Imrie & Raco (2003), Nash (2002) and Taylor (2002) were brought together in a single typology of “community,” and used to identify which discourses of “community” can be associated with urban policies of the Third Way. Secondly, the six community involvement principles that Chanan (2003) identified in the White Paper Our Towns and Cities were used to identify whether such “community involvement” principles could be translated into key urban policies under New Labour and indeed whether a triangle of mutually enhancing “community involvement” objectives could be identified in these policies.

It became apparent from the review of policy documents in Chapter 4 that discourse analysis could only take the study of power relationships in urban regeneration so far, making it necessary to adopt other research method techniques, namely, participant

observation, questionnaires and semi structured interviews in order to identify how power was exercised on the ground.

3.4.2 Stage 2: *The Scoping Study*

The second stage of the data collection strategy for this thesis involved doing case study research. Case studies are defined by Yin (1994) as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context.” p13. The case study approach was chosen because it provides insights into how stakeholder relationships happen/ work/ do work in a real life situation. It allows detailed consideration of how decision-making processes work, how these patterns are lived out and how the policy rhetoric (the ideal) is converted into practice at the local level. Case studies are also good for showing how factors and circumstances come together over time, as one factor alone is unlikely to be the cause of limited third sector participation within urban regeneration initiatives. Case studies can also be used to illustrate patterns identified in the literature or show variations to these patterns identified in the wider literature (Yin, 1994, Kane & O'Reilly- De Brun, 2001, Gomm et al, 2000). Two case studies were chosen to complement each other and draw out the different ways in which the third sector participates in urban regeneration initiatives and how the problems manifest themselves in each case.

Despite the strengths of the case study approach there is a need to be aware of the inherent limitations of utilising this method of inquiry. As a research endeavour case studies have often been viewed as a less desirable form of inquiry, because of the lack of rigor in case study research in the past, where equivocal evidence or biased views were allowed to influence the direction of their findings and conclusions. Case studies are also criticised for being time consuming and providing little basis for scientific generalisation, despite generalisations between similar cases being possible. This is because a detailed understanding of the situation is considered more important than a representative picture (Yin, 1994, Kane & O'Reilly- De Brun, 2001, Gomm et al, 2000).

The North London sub region was identified as the area of study based on a scoping study, which comprised of interviews with key informants in the four North London boroughs of Barnet, Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest. The aim of the scoping

study was to obtain background information on the participatory mechanisms in operation, to identify the issues linked to community participation, to present the research to potential respondents, and on the basis of their interest, to set up relationships that would allow participant observation of community meetings and access to potential key respondents for interviewing. A list of semi-structured interviews and telephone interviews conducted for the scoping study can be found in Appendix A.

The scoping study revealed a range of community participation mechanisms were in operation in the North London Sub Region (see Table 3.3). It also identified the key issues facing these mechanisms at the time and the feasibility of researching them.

Table 3.3: Community Participation Mechanisms in operation in the North London Sub Region: 2004

	Community Participation Mechanisms								
North London Boroughs	LSP	CEN	NRF& CEF	NDC	Area Forums/ Assemblies/ Community Councils	SRB	Residents/ Citizen Panels	VCO Forum	Youth Assembly
<i>Barnet</i>	*				*		*		
<i>Enfield</i>	*	*	*		*		*		*
<i>Haringey</i>	*	*	*	*	*	*			
<i>Waltham Forest</i>	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	

The scoping study identified several layers of governance within the locality; at the sub-regional level, the North London Strategic Alliance (NLSA), is a sub regional partnership that all four boroughs are members of. The Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) were a second tier of governance with the LSPs in Barnet, Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest all demonstrating different levels of development, with each experiencing a range of difficulties in their setting up of their CENs. For example, the Enfield Strategic Partnership and the Enfield Community Empowerment Network (ECEN) were both well developed, but ECEN appeared to have some representational issues regarding BME groups. Waltham Forest Strategic Partnership was substantially developed, but there were problems with Waltham Forest's Community Empowerment Network because the umbrella body responsible for it (Waltham Forest Voluntary Action) was overworked, suggesting that issues regarding the capacity of the third sector were a particular problem here. HarCEN, Haringey's Community Empowerment Network was very much in its infancy at the time of the scoping study, where as Barnet

a non- NRF funded borough, with no statutory obligation to set up a CEN had set up an LSP in order to respond to the current government agenda more effectively and efficiently. The scoping study also revealed the existence of various Neighbourhood Forums/ Assemblies or Community Councils which were to feed into the LSP structures, as a third tier of governance.

From the scoping study several potential areas of interest to this research were identified. Initially, the SRB programmes in Haringey (Joining Up Northumbertand Park, West Green Learning Neighbourhood and the Finsbury Park Partnership) looked potentially interesting because they were held up as innovative examples of neighbourhood management (the third tier of governance). The SRB programmes situated in Haringey were also supported by a Neighbourhood Resource Centre, which would have provided a good point of contact for the primary data collection. However, SRB programmes at the time of the scoping study were developing their "exit strategies" as these programmes came to an end. Secondly, Haringey's New Deal for Communities entitled "the Bridge" was of interest, but the LSPs and CENs were more clearly identifiable as a tier of governance operating throughout the borough and because Haringey was the only borough in the North London Sub Region to have an NDC there was no scope for comparative work. Lastly, the scoping study identified that Resident's/ Citizen's Panels were limited to postal survey questionnaires with a very limited level of resident participation. This would have provided limited scope for investigation.

I felt that by looking at a range of different community participation mechanisms in operation in the North London Sub Region I would be in danger of finding out a little about lots of different initiatives in the North London Sub Region and not having any substantial or rich case studies. Consequently, I decided to look at CENs and their associated LSPs in two of the four localities: Haringey and Enfield. Haringey was chosen because of its unique history regarding the relationship between the statutory and voluntary sector and its innovative, but somewhat "chaotic" democracy. It is also one of only two CENs in the UK to be an independent body. In contrast, Enfield was chosen because its CEN demonstrates an "organised" form of democracy and is held up as an example of good practice, with many other CENs (including Haringey)

contacting it for advice on how to do things. Thus together, Haringey and Enfield CENs appear to provide contrasting case studies.

In line with Maxwell's (1996) model the research design and methodology of this thesis evolved and have been altered as some initial elements have become weaker and new insights have emerged influencing methodological choices. For example, the results of the interviews conducted for the scoping study highlighted some important elements. This included the discrepancies between the meanings research participants at the local level attached to terms such as "community," "community participation" and the "voluntary and community sectors" and those that can be interpreted in the national policy literature. It also illustrated that the way local actors interpreted such key terms influenced the level of decision-making power that third sector groups received. The scoping study also highlighted that empowerment of the community in regeneration was "conditional."

This revealed a gap between the discourse and the assumptions found in the policy literature and the situation on the ground. As a consequence of these findings the purpose of the research had to be reviewed in order to ensure such an important aspect would be taken into consideration. I returned, therefore, to the theories and typologies informing the research to find the necessary material to address these issues. Practical difficulties of limited accessibility to specific contacts as a result of "gatekeepers" also affected the initial research design, which subsequently resulted in revisiting the research questions and the data collection methods to answer these questions.

In the design of the interviews for the scoping study a key consideration was the level of structure/ formality required because structured interviews offer comparability, while less structured interviews offer contextual understanding of complex issues. Less structured interviews were used during the scoping study of community participation mechanism within the North London sub region because this was intended to be exploratory. The aim was to gain information about the community participation mechanisms in operation in the study area and the feasibility of researching these, as well as which areas or topics were important and of central significance to the research, before embarking on designing a more precise method of data collection. Therefore,

the scoping study guided the research process and the research questions and informed the design of the fieldwork methodology. For the fieldwork itself, semi structured interviews were employed because there was a need for participants to answer specific core questions and also because of time constraints imposed on the data collection.

3.4.3 Stage 3: Participant Observation

Participant observation was chosen primarily because of the need to understand the context of a complex situation. Rapport needed to be established over a period of time before people would co-operate, because third sector partners are often suspicious of researchers, partly due to the lack of sensitivity that is often given towards community politics. Participant observation essentially involves three core elements: (1) participating on a long term basis in a natural setting, (2) using a flexible open ended approach based on induction (allowing data to unfold) and (3) drawing on research techniques not just watching and doing, but listening, asking and looking at documents. This combination of long exposure, triangulation and first hand empirical data provided insights not easily available through other research methods. For example, in interviews/ surveys a respondent is asked for an account / to relate their experience. The researcher does not personally experience the event. The basis of participant observation is that as researchers experience events themselves, they attain a deeper understanding. Participant observation generates information rich/ in-depth: case specific to time and place, contextual, process, behavioural, as well as factual and attitudinal data

Participant observation is useful for this thesis because a central concern of this study is how power relationships operate in reality. Thus "direct participant observation" was the only plausible way to try to understand the ideas that shape these relationships and what they mean for third sector partners. The aim of participant observation in this study was to describe the setting of the Community Empowerment Network and Local Strategic Partnership meetings, the decision making processes that took place (how participants were motivated) and the behaviours and interactions of the key stakeholders (who spoke up, who remained silent or whom was called upon by others). Participant observation is also useful to discover whether people do what they say they do, or behave in the way they claim to behave. Thus, it is an invaluable method for the

study of community participation, where there is a considerable gap between the ideal (the policy rhetoric of community participation) and the reality of practice (what stakeholders actually do on the ground).

It is often assumed that participant observation is mainly useful for obtaining descriptions of events and behaviour, whereas interviews are mainly useful for obtaining perspectives. This is a misconception because the immediate results of participant observation are indeed descriptive, but it is also equally true of interviewing, because it gives a description of what is said, not a direct understanding of participant's perspectives. Generating an interpretation of participants perspectives requires inference from descriptions (Punch, 1998). Therefore, participant observation enabled me to draw inferences about respondents and meanings and perspectives that could not be obtained by relying exclusively on interview data. This is especially true for getting at tacit understandings and aspects of respondent's perspectives that they were reluctant to state directly in an interview.

Participant observations of Community Empowerment Network and Local Strategic Partnership meetings were used to collect data on the context in which respondents interact to reach decisions. Data collected comprised of field notes together with agendas, minutes of meetings and Community Empowerment Network Representatives training course materials. Participant observation was made possible on the basis of different agreements with research participants organised on both long term and single agreements. A list of the participant observations that took place in the two case study areas to date can be found in Appendix B.

There are many generic strengths of using ethnographic research methods such as participant observation. Firstly, it enables a contemporary phenomenon (such as community participation within urban regeneration) to be investigated within its real life context, providing insights into how the phenomenon works and operates in a real life situation, allowing a better understanding of complex processes, relationships, interactions and behaviours in a larger context. Secondly, the "thick descriptions" often used in participant observation findings also provides an in-depth understanding of the culture of the different sectors from the "inside" in terms that the participants use to describe what is going on. This enables the researcher to get close to the reality of the

social phenomena in ways that are not feasible with experiments or survey research methods. Thirdly, the research process of participant observation work is inductive/discovery based rather than being limited to explicit hypotheses. Finally, ethnographic accounts are written in a style that gives the reader the impression that you are observing the scene being described, making the study interesting and understandable to non-academics and readers that are unfamiliar with the study (Fetterman, 1998, Hammesley, 1998, Cook & Crang, 1995, Robson, 2002).

Despite these strengths of the participant observation approach some inherent limitations of utilising this method of enquiry can be identified. For example, participant observation is subjective, and can be subject to bias, because the observer can never pass by entirely unnoticed and its results rely on the researcher's interpretation of what is seen. Thus, participant observation is an obtrusive research method where the researcher becomes part of the situation and therefore, has an effect on it, what Bryman (2001) terms as a "reactive effect," where the participants know that a person is conducting research and that they are the focus of the investigation. This awareness may influence how participants respond, affecting the data collected. The three components of the "reactive effect" related to participant observation include: (1) "the guinea pig effect" – participants are aware of being observed and want to create a good impression or feel inclined to behave in ways they would not normally, (2) "role selection" – participants seek out cues about the aims of the research and behave accordingly to those perceptions and (3) "measurement as a change agent" – the very fact that a researcher is in a setting in which no researcher is normally present may cause things to be different and as a consequence influence behaviour. The "reactive effect" draws attention to the fact that if people adjust according to the observer's presence their behaviour would have to be considered atypical. Raising the question as to whether we can consider the results indicative of what happens in reality and how valid the results are.

It is also important to be aware that participant observation has several practical difficulties, which include access in terms of entry and acceptance, personal affinity (having an empathic understanding), reflexivity in interpretations and analysis, and authenticity. The researcher also imposes their own reality on the account causing reliability of the data to be sometimes questioned in terms of intra observer

consistency, and the level of consistency of the application of the observation schedule over time is also an issue, as people behave differently on different occasions and in different contexts. In addition, observer fatigue and lapses in attention by the researcher are common. Researchers can get over involved with the people being studied, possibly disturbing and changing the natural setting and hence compromising the quality of the research. Researchers have also been known to "go native" resulting in them discontinuing the study or moving from the role of researcher to advocate. However, it is important to note that participant observation researchers believe in order to truly grasp the experiences of the subjects from their point of view, the researcher has to enter into a relationship with them and hence disturb the natural setting. And in any case as Fetterman (1998: 36) states "given time people forget their "company" behaviour and fall back into familiar patterns of behaviour." This suggests that by and large respondents become accustomed to being observed, so the researcher becomes less intrusive the longer they are present. In addition, the time to collect the data can be very extensive, extending over a number of years, requiring considerable experience and a resilient personality because there is a need to adapt the technique as the situation evolves.

Also generalisations and replicability of findings are often difficult in participant observation research because of the small settings/ samples used. Therefore, the results may not be useful beyond the immediate setting. Finally, as a consequence of the explanatory nature of participant observation there can often be differences between the original focus of the research and the reports produced. For example, there may be a discrepancy between the terms in which the research focus is justified and the motives that originally inspired the research (Fetterman, 1998, Hammesley, 1998, Cook & Crang, 1995, Robson, 2002).

Observations of Community Empowerment Network and Local Strategic Partnership meetings were also limited by the number and timing of meetings that were scheduled to take place in the study areas as well as the sectoral interests that were present at these meetings. At Community Empowerment Network meetings and in the case of Haringey, Consultative Forums, only representatives of voluntary and community organisations were present, whilst Local Strategic Partnership meetings were cross-sectoral in their representation (e.g. representatives from the public, private and third

sectors were present). Community Empowerment Network Members meeting were monthly, Community Empowerment Network Representatives meetings and Local Strategic Partnership meetings were bimonthly and Consultative Forums (in Haringey only) were quarterly.

Recording and Analysing of Participant Observations

Written Field Notes

Participant observation of Community Empowerment Network and Local Strategic Partnership meetings involved the recording and analysing of both the content and the process (interactive- process analysis) of the meetings. Recording of observations primarily comprised note taking at the scene and then writing them out more fully some time later the same day. This is because it is estimated by Robert Rhoades (1987) that a researcher forgets 50% of their observations in 24 hours and forgets more than 75% by the end of the second day, together with the fact that the note taking method is easy to use, minimal in expense and unobtrusive. I also added details to my field notes about the circumstances, physical features and background information on the number of participants attended or events that I was aware of i.e. how I came to attend the meeting, who suggested/ invited/ gave permission for me to attend. It was important to record this because the person allowing me access maybe disliked or suspected by the people at the meeting, which may be subsequently important in explaining why a particular meeting went the way it did. Details were also added about the setting and participants. In the case of Local Strategic Partnership meetings and HarCEN Members meetings a floor plan of each meeting was drawn, as seating arrangements at meetings often have social meanings. For example, shifts in seating arrangements during a meeting may indicate shifts in power and allegiance – those controlling the meeting may position themselves at one end and their opponents may establish their own territory at the other end of the room. It may also reveal that all the people supporting one side of an issue may tend to sit in a group together. In the case of Community Empowerment Network meetings in Enfield a note was made as to who sat at the top table. In order to gain evidence on how power works in organisations and partnerships, key proposals put forward and decisions that were made by communities were tracked to see if they were waylaid (when, how and by whom) using decision trail forms.

Factors that may have influenced the type and quality of the information were also recorded such as people being inhibited by my presence or others presence. Having to participate myself in Community Empowerment Network Representatives training courses restricted note taking during these events, as I had to write entirely by memory. Lastly, questions that I wanted to pursue with participants were recorded. In the field notes, my research outline was used to collect and organise the information under key topic areas. (Kane & O'Reilly- De Brun, 2001, Fetterman, 1998).

3.4.4 Stage 4: Questionnaire

It became apparent from participant observations (stage 3) and discussions with the Co-ordinator of the Enfield Community Empowerment Network (ECEN) in particular, that baseline data, did not exist in the two case study localities, with respect to:

- Members attitudes towards the operation of the Community Empowerment Networks and the effectiveness of their working
- The level of understanding and/ or awareness voluntary and community organisations had about what was going on in their local area and their control over it
- The type of voluntary and community organisations taking an interest in things locally and those that were not and the reasons for their non participation
- Whether members felt community participation had in fact changed since the existence of Community Empowerment Networks
- The level of involvement of voluntary and community organisations in the local agenda.

As the ECEN Co-ordinator stated: "We know we are doing good stuff, but we need evidence. We currently only have superficial ways of measuring voluntary and community organisations impact."²

As a result I was asked by ECEN to design a Community Empowerment Questionnaire (see Appendix C) that would provide them with this evidence base to improve the effectiveness of their working. It was also agreed that the data could be used as part of

² Semi- Structured Interview conducted with the ECEN Co-ordinator on 06/12/04

this thesis, in order to tackle some key questions to do with the reach and impact of VCO participation in regeneration policy, and to test some ideas about the extent to which VCO participation was now embedded in policy practice. Subsequently, the results of the questionnaire were put on the Enfield Observatory, a web-based service that holds a variety of information about Enfield, including socio-economic conditions and performance of public services.³ Once the Community Empowerment Network questionnaire had been designed HarCEN (Haringey's Community Empowerment Network) showed interest in using it on similar terms. The content and rationale of the questionnaire will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

Question Types and Design

The Community Empowerment Network Questionnaire comprised mainly closed questions (i.e. questions that are presented with a set of fixed alternatives from which the respondent has to choose an appropriate answer from), particularly through the use of Likert scale⁴ questions to measure attitudes and opinions. Closed questions were chosen over open questions for the Community Empowerment Network questionnaire because they were easier to complete for respondents, processing answers was simpler and quicker as pre-set coding systems were already in place, reducing variability in the recording of answers. Closed questions also enhanced the comparability of answers and clarified the meaning of questions for respondents because of the options that were made available to them. Closed questions also provided a reliable way of making people respond to issues that this research is interested in, but avoided the danger of open ended questions where respondents provide more information than is actually needed. Whilst open questions may generate more detailed and rich information, this would be at the expense of increasing the size of the questionnaire which has a dramatic impact on completion time and the likelihood of patchy data because respondents have a tendency to not answer open ended questions at all, so as to complete the questionnaire as quickly as possible (Bryman, 2001, Langdrige, 2004).

³ Participant Observations at ECEN Members Meeting on 18/01/05

⁴ Likert scales are a five (or more) point scale where respondents are able to express how much they agree or disagree with a list of attitude statements. An attitude scale consists of a list of such statements, all of which are different, but attempt to tap some consistent underlying attitude surrounding a particular theme or area of interest.

Questionnaires are a valuable method of data collection for collecting data from a large number of people, and a convenient way of collecting background or baseline data. The strengths of the questionnaire approach were that the effects of interventions such as the Community Empowerment Networks would be measured alongside factual, and incidences of behavioural and attitudinal information about the individual Community Empowerment Networks in Enfield and Haringey. Generalisations of the wider population of Community Empowerment Networks would also be possible.

Questionnaires were also useful for obtaining baseline characteristics of the voluntary and community sector organisations involved in the Community Empowerment Networks and their views on their effectiveness, as this data did not exist in the two case study localities (Bryman, 2001, Langdridge, 2004).

However, these strengths of the questionnaire approach were at the expense of the amount of information or detail that could be collected and the need to maximise the quality of the data without increasing the size of the questionnaire unnecessarily. The general principles of questionnaires were that they should be short (questions should only be included if there was a good reason for their inclusion), quick and easy to complete unless there was a strong reason for doing otherwise (aesthetically pleasing to respondents), language should be appropriate to respondents, response options for each question should be appropriate for the question and piloting of questionnaires was essential. Essentially, questionnaires require a trade off between simplicity of data collection (e.g. the ease of completion) and the depth of information gathered.

The questionnaire design affects the responses received as the wording and phrasing of questions, length and layout may determine the level of responses. Together with the fact that questionnaires require large sample sizes and sampling frameworks, there are design, time and space limitations, and coding and data input takes considerable time. It is also difficult to make fixed choices exhaustive. Thus closed questions can appear irritating to respondents, as a category that applies to them may not be there (i.e. the researchers structure is imposed on the respondents). There is always the possibility that respondents will deviate from fixed categories, it was hoped that the response category "other" would deal with this, asking respondents to state what they mean by "other." There is always the risk of variation in understanding of key terms in the

respondent's answers (i.e. affecting validity) or that limiting the number of possible responses gives no real "meaning" to respondents, so they fill out the questionnaire without any real thought. Closed questions also make it difficult to establish rapport with respondents because of the "lack of engagement." Types of responses offered in closed questions are often criticised because yes /no options give clear-cut notions; whilst other scales or rankings are more subjective (e.g. what does 'strongly agree' mean compared to 'agree' etc) (Floyd & Fowler, 1995, Fink, 1995, Oppenheim, 1992)

The ordering or wording of questions (e.g. double barrelled or "leading" questions or particular jargon, slang or technical and ambiguous terms) can lead respondents into a particular set of answers. The Community Empowerment Network Questionnaire started with simple non- controversial questions and works towards more sensitive questions gradually, giving explanations as to why these questions need to be asked and the way in which the questionnaire is progressing, by sectioning the questionnaire. There is a danger that acquiescence may occur. This is where respondents consistently agree or disagree with a set of questions, which is termed by Langdridge (2004) as "response set bias" which can be a result of "social desirability effects" (where a respondent attempts to look good by providing answers they believe the researcher wants or answers that portray them in the best possible light). It is for this reason that in Question 32 of the Community Empowerment Network Questionnaire, the statements were not all positively or negatively worded, but mixed so as to make the statements unpredictable and avoid consistently the same responses to all the negatively worded statements and consistently the same responses to all the positively worded statements. Instead, the statements are arranged so that the respondents have to think about each individual statement and for those respondents who always respond either positively or negatively a central score has been provided rather than an extreme one (see Appendix C).

Long questions or very general questions can cause respondents to lose the thread of the question as they lack frame of reference/ specificity, encouraging them to skip the question. Other 'problem' questions are those that assume knowledge or those that make excessive demands on memory. Many questionnaires suffer from low completion rates, especially in the case of postal questionnaires, but this was the only feasible option to reach all the Community Empowerment Network members in the two case

study localities. Attempts were made to maximise the response rate by keeping the questionnaire fairly short with a clear layout and the inclusion of a pre-paid envelope for respondents to return the questionnaire (Floyd & Fowler, 1995, Fink, 1995, Oppenheim, 1992)

3.4.5 Stage 5: Semi- Structured Interviews

Semi structured interviews were conducted with key informants involved in the Community Empowerment Networks and Local Strategic Partnerships about their urban regeneration decision making processes as the best way of finding information out about the actual practice and experience. Interviews are a good way of understanding past events that may have implications on current practices and also provide additional information that can be missed in participant observation and can be used to check the accuracy of the observations. Semi- structured interviews have a list of questions or specific topics to be covered (often referred to as an interview guide or schedule). The interviewer asks certain questions the same way each time, but they have greater freedom in the sequence of questions, in their exact wording and the amount of time or attention that is given to different topics (Robson, 1993). In fact, this stage of the research was highly successful in both adding understanding of the local experience of participation in the two case study areas, and raising new theoretical and policy relevant issues for the research.

Semi- structured interviews were chosen because they are adaptable allowing the interviewer to be able to probe and prompt beyond the answers, allowing the interviewer to get closer to the respondent's views, motives and feelings. Inviting respondents to elaborate, encourage further thought and to return to earlier points. It allowed the researcher to seek clarification or elaboration on the answers given (unlike questionnaires, which have to be taken at face value) and still provided a greater structure for cross-case comparability than the unstructured format (May, 2001). This method is particularly valuable for the study of urban regeneration initiatives because the people being interviewed included those from voluntary and community sectors with each requiring a different approach to the interview; including different wording, order and length. For example, if the author had used professional or official sounding language to some of those in the third sector who were wary of officials, they may not

co-operate. This method has also been effective in drawing out the conflicting viewpoints of participants from the different sectors. (Sarantakos, 1998, (Robson, 2002, Bryman, 2001, Arksey & Knight, 1999, Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, Gilbert, 1993)

Other benefits to utilising this method included the opportunity to observe non-verbal behaviour, as the way in which responses are made, the tone of voice, facial expressions, hesitations etc. provided information that a written response would conceal. Semi structured interviewing also provided the capacity for correcting misunderstandings by respondents, the capacity for clearing up inconsistencies in answers and greater permissible length. Most importantly, the interviewer had control over the order of the questions, so as to be able to deal with the fact that respondents often provided answers to questions that were going to appear later. It also enabled the interviewer to change the direction of the interview, following up interesting comments. Interviews also enabled clarification of reasons for discrepancies between stated attitudes and behaviour (Sarantakos, 1998, Bryman, 2001, Hakim, 2000).

Semi-structured interviews do have certain limitations as a method of inquiry. This includes the fact that interviewing is a highly subjective technique and therefore there is a danger of interview bias or what survey researchers term "response effects" (the fact that the interviewer may influence the respondent's replies by their presence). Coupled with the risk of asking leading or double questions or commenting on respondent's answers. For example, Borg (1981:87) stated "the eagerness of the respondent to please the interviewer, a vague antagonism that sometimes arises between interviewer and respondent or the tendency of the interviewer to seek out the answers that support their preconceived notions are a few of the factors that may contribute to the biasing of data obtained from interviews." The fact that interviews are extremely time consuming and like other data collection techniques can be subject to misinterpretation of the facts or experience difficulties in obtaining co-operation from potential respondents are also potential problems. (Sarantakos, 1998, Bryman, 2001, Arksey & Knight, 1999, Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, Gilbert, 1993)

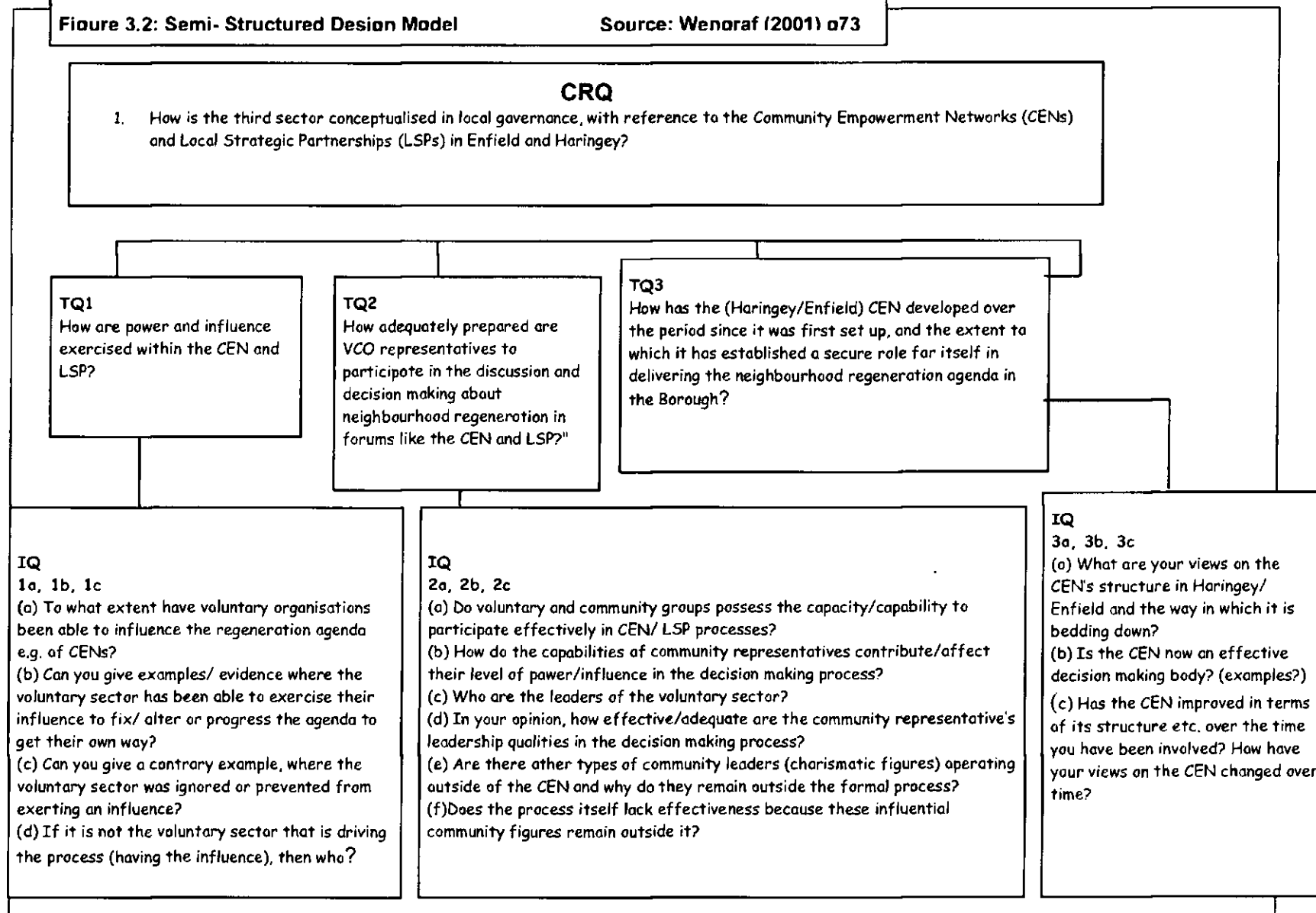
By adopting a semi- structured approach to interviewing the questions asked and the answers recorded are more standardised than those from unstructured interviews, keeping error to a minimum and enhancing validity. Variation in responses will therefore be more likely to be a consequence of "true" or "real" variation and not a result of the

interview context/ error. However, interviewer variability is still possible, due to a poorly worded question, inconsistencies in the way the interviewer asks questions and/or records/ processes the answers (intra interviewer variability), and misunderstanding or memory problems on the part of the interviewee.

The semi- structured interviews in this study were developed using Wengraf's (2001) design model, the main objective of this model is to distinguish between research questions and interview questions as they belong to different domains. Research questions are expressed in the language of conceptual variables that the research aims to investigate, while interview questions are empirical indicators of the variables under investigation and are developed in the language of the respondents. Following Wengraf's (2001) model the initial central research question (CRQ) has been divided into six topical questions (TQ) (three of which are shown in Figure 3.2). These have then guided the development of interview questions (IQ). Each topical question develops into a series of interview/ informant questions, with attention being made to using appropriate language for the respondents (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Semi- Structured Design Model

Source: Wenoraf (2001) a73



This approach is pre-structured because the development of the semi structured interview schedule is to answer specific research questions. The central research question (CRQ) and topical questions (TQ) assist to develop a coherent model to pass from the theory language derived from the conceptual context in Chapter 2 to the definition of empirical tools that attempt to answer the question in Chapters 5 onwards.

The Research Participants and the Research Relationship Established with Participants

Research participants comprised a cross selection of different stakeholders from voluntary sector, and community organisations. Negotiating a research relationship involves “gaining access” to a setting and/or “establishing rapport” with the participants (Maxwell, 1996). It is an ongoing process whereby continual negotiations and renegotiations of the relationships are required. The unwillingness of people to be interviewed inevitably affected decisions as to which research technique to use as well as which sampling technique to adopt.

Decisions about Sampling

Representatives from the voluntary sector and community organisations involved in Community Empowerment Networks and Local Strategic Partnerships were chosen to be interviewed because the third sector stakeholders were considered the key informants required for this study. Interviewees from the third sector were drawn from the Community Empowerment Network questionnaire (i.e. those participants that indicated they would be willing to participate in a further stage of the research) and any respondents of the questionnaire that appeared to possess a particular specialisation or represented a particular viewpoint or expertise (i.e. they were considered a typical or unusual participant, were influential in the decision making process or marginal or expressed particular vested interests for their participation). Details and further rationale are provided in Chapter 7.

Semi-structured interviews were tape recorded because it was felt interaction between the researcher and respondent would be disjointed having to pause continuously to write things down, and that information may be lost while the interviewer joined in the conversation. Most importantly it ensured that the interviewees' answers were captured

in their own terms, because when an interviewer takes notes it is easy to lose phrases and the language used. This enabled the wording of statements the researcher wished to quote directly to be checked, as well as the accuracy of the notes taken (Fetterman, 1998). Tape recording also reduced the interview time, which benefited the respondents, since their responsibilities to the regeneration partnerships were additional to their workloads. Gilbert (1993) also believes that note taking is slow, putting doubt in the data's validity and tape recording gives the impression that the responses are being taken seriously. Tape recording is also useful when identifying categories for analysis, as you are able to listen on numerous occasions until you are satisfied with your chosen categories. However, the researcher is aware of the ethics of tape recording, so requests to record have to be explicit and confidentiality guaranteed.

The limitations of tape recording are that respondents may feel uncomfortable and become self conscious at the prospect of their words being preserved and as result could hold back valuable information. However, to avoid unnecessary tension and to strengthen the bond between the respondent and the researcher, I stopped the tape when topics were touched upon which the respondent felt were too sensitive to be recorded. The use of technical aids can also sometimes give a sense of false security of having recorded absolutely everything, when in fact tape recording does not produce "kinesic" information such as body movements, gestures, facial expressions, physical characteristics of the setting and the circumstances. It is for this reason that I made notes on how the interview went, where it took place, whether the interview opened up new avenues of interest, the setting and the respondent's body language. These factors were then recited onto the end of the tape (Bryman, 2001, Fetterman, 1998).

Other drawbacks to utilising this method include the fact that transcription is extremely time-consuming (e.g. it is best to allow six to ten hours for every hour of speech). It also yields vast amounts of paper to wade through when analysing the data. Mistakes in transcription can also occur as a result of mishearing, fatigue and carelessness. Further problems can occur if tapes are not transcribed and edited as soon as possible and are left to pile up. This can result in it being difficult to tell how the research is progressing, whether the researcher has enough on a particular topic or whether the researcher is unintentionally skipping research points (Bryman, 2001). It is for this reason all interviews were transcribed and edited within at least two days of recording.

3.5 Validity

Validity refers to the correctness or credibility of the explanations, interpretations, descriptions and conclusions (Maxwell, 1996). A key concept here is the “validity threat,” that is how the researcher might come to a wrong explanation. If I had only investigated the meanings that local actors give to key terms such as “community participation” the results could be flawed because the rhetoric on community participation that exists in policy documentation could be easily reproduced by the local actors. In contrast, focusing on the values and motives for participation in the policy process moves the attention to elements shaping the formation of urban regeneration decisions.

The strategies I used to reduce validity threats included:

- Avoidance of invalid descriptions which created inaccuracies or incompleteness of the data. Audio recordings of interviews were made and transcribed. For participant observation, recording was more difficult to do (both practically and ethically) and more difficult to transcribe, so observational notes were as detailed and chronological as possible.
- Avoidance of invalid interpretations which occur by imposing one’s own framework or meaning, rather than understanding the perspective of the participants and the meanings they attach to their words/ actions. To check these I attempt to learn how participants make sense of what is going on, rather than pigeonholing their words/ actions into my own frameworks. Member checks and feedback from others (both those familiar and unfamiliar with the research) have been used to avoid this problem. These involved soliciting feedback on data and conclusions from the participants under study (helping to rule out misinterpretations of meaning of what they say and perspectives of what is going on). As well as avoiding asking leading, closed or short answer questions that do not give the participants the opportunity to reveal their own perspective.
- Avoidance of theoretical invalidity, which resulted from not collecting or paying attention to discrepant data or not considering alternative explanations or

understandings. A considerable effort has been made to search for discrepant evidence and negative cases and careful consideration has been given as to whether it more plausible to retain or modify the conclusions.

- Attempts were made to avoid two specific validity threats: (i) Researcher bias which involves the researcher selecting data that fits the researcher's existing theory and preconceptions and the selection of data that "stands out" to the researcher (Milers and Huberman, 1994 p263) "inherent reflexivity of qualitative research." (ii) Reactivity – The influence the researcher has on the setting or individuals studied. The decision to collect information from a diverse range of individuals and settings, using a variety of methods (triangulation) (Denzin, 1970) helped here, reducing the risk of the study only reflecting systematic biases of one specific method. Thus allowing a better assessment of the validity and generality of the explanations that were developed. As Becker (1970) pointed out for participant observation, it is not as serious as some believe because in a natural setting an observer is generally much less of an influence on the participant's behaviour than the setting itself. Whereas in the case of interviews it is a powerful and inescapable influence: what a respondent says is always a function of the interviewer and the interview situation. Therefore, the use of participant observation and semi structured interviewing provided a more complete and accurate account than either could achieve alone

3.6 Ethical Considerations: Issues, Content, Access & Respondents' Protection

Ethical issues affect research in a number of ways ranging from setting up relationships with potential respondents, to the actual observations and interviews, to the transparency of negotiations with respondents over research objectives, interpretation of findings and the use of the research findings.

"Research ethics is about being clear about the nature of the agreement you have entered into with your research subjects or contacts. Ethical research involves getting the informed consent of those you are going to interview, question, observe or take materials from. It involves reaching agreement about the uses of this data and how its analysis will be reported and disseminated. And it is about keeping to such agreements when they have been reached." Blaxter et al (1996) cited in Bell (1999) p39.

With the above definition of research ethics in mind the following measures were taken to ensure agreements that were made with my research subjects were clear and explicit:

This research followed the ethical guidelines of the Social Research Association (2004). A formal written approach was made to individuals and organisations concerned, stating that I was carrying out an investigation in connection with my PhD. An information research leaflet was also enclosed with the letter since Homan (1991) believes human subjects of research should be allowed to agree or refuse to participate in light of comprehensive information concerning the nature and purpose of the research. At participant observation events request for permission from everyone who passed my line of sight could not be obtained, but I explained in general terms what I was investigating and that I wanted to see community meetings in operation to the Chairs of these community meetings and key officials. I have ensured that the people observed did not suffer as a result of what I have written/ reported about these observations by ensuring anonymity.

At the interview stage an informed consent form was supplied to the respondent and read out before the beginning of the session (Arksey & Knight, 1999, Robson, 2002, Bell 1999, Rees, 2002, Dean, 1996). A copy of the form was left with the respondent so that they had a written reminder of what they agreed to. In light of the evidence from Homan (1991) and Hart & Bond (1995) cited in Bell (1999) respondents were not required to sign a copy of the informed consent form before the interview began, because when a signature is sought subjects are rather less inclined to commit themselves. With Hart & Bond (1995) stating:

"It is not sufficient for the interviewer simply to read it (the protocol) out and then expect the respondent to sign.... The respondent might justifiably feel anxious about signing anything, particularly at an early stage when the interviewer may be unknown to him or her. In our view it would be better to give the respondent time to read and re-read the protocol for himself or herself at his or her own pace and to negotiate any additions or changes to it with the researcher." p39.

The identity of study respondents was not disclosed nor any comments made in the interviews that could be attributed in ways that permit individuals or institutions to be recognised. Respondents were anonymised by pseudonyms i.e. via the use of generic roles, and code numbers. Access to potential participants in this area of research has been overly problematic, with care and respect required in light of community politics.

Ethical issues arose from the process of setting up relationships with potential respondents in terms of negotiating between their interests, their willingness to participate and the object of the research. Consequently, numerous agreements were pursued in order to conduct the fieldwork and the failure of some of these initial agreements has affected some research choices, namely the data collection techniques. Ethics of doing a questionnaire survey “for” organisations (as opposed to independently) was also a potential issue.

If respondents expressed an interest they were given access to the research findings and were given the opportunity to comment on them, especially if they believed it could affect them in some way. However, the use of their comments remained within the final decision of the researcher. Results of the research were offered in its final form as a type of reciprocity.

3.7 Conclusions

In summary, the value of the methodology used was both (1) a way of studying an evolving process, in which participants are learning and (2) the way the methodology leads to “discoveries” and new questions, needing new and unexpected theoretical principles must be stressed. The idea of the methodology as a staged and sequential procedure, whereby each stage is assessing a particular research question/ set of research questions is of paramount importance (see Table 3.2). Each stage was capable of raising new issues and perspectives, including in later stages an awareness of participation as a process/ learning process, the role and influence of local conditions and factors enabling the transition to “governance” (e.g. trust, co-operation, flexible infrastructure and leadership bodies).

Further discussion of methodological issues will take place throughout subsequent chapters, in reference to the use and analysis of different forms of data collected within these different stages.

CHAPTER 4

THE POLICY CONTEXT

4. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to provide a historical dimension of how community participation has evolved in urban regeneration policy over the last forty years, so as to be able to show how the past influences current practice. In doing this, the chapter examines the contrasting discourses (and definitions) of "voluntary" and "community" sector and "community involvement," which underpins urban policy i.e. the ways in which government institutions use the term "community involvement." The chapter concludes with comments on the intellectual and practical contradictions of the urban policy framework of New Labour. In this way, the chapter provides both context for understanding the actual implementation of the community participation agenda described in subsequent chapters, and also a "benchmark" of expectations and intended outcomes against which the actual policy infrastructure, practices and achievements can be judged.

4.1 The Policy Process

This chapter begins with an examination of the policy process, so as to be able to appreciate how ideologies are converted into practicable policies and the inevitable "warping" of these as part of this process. A widely held view of the policy process is the "linear model" (see Jenkins, 1993, p36). This outlines policy making as a rational, balanced, objective and analytical problem solving process, whereby decisions are made in a series of sequential phases by purposive actors, which start with the identification of a problem (point of entry) and end with a course of action to solve or deal with it (termination). Using the linear model, the identified "problem" is seen as technical, the climate as consensual and the process as controlled by senior officials and ministers. It is useful, in identifying the ordering of policy activities (Sutton, 1999, Gordon *et al*, 1993, Marinetto, 1999)

Concepts and tools including policy narratives and discourse analysis have highlighted different aspects of the policy process and critiqued the view that it is simply a linear course of action(s) and replaced it with a more complex process (Apthorpe, 1986). This has led to policy making being seen as an inescapably political activity into which

individual perceptions and interests enter at all stages. In this sense implementation becomes a bargained outcome, the environment becomes conflictual and the process is characterised by diversity and constraint (i.e. it is a problematic activity rather than something that can be taken for granted). (Sutton, 1999, Gordon *et al*, 1993) This has led Jenkins (1993) to characterise the policy process as an input- output model of the political system (see Jenkins, 1993, p40). Thus policy must be understood as a political process, as much as an analytical or problem solving one. In analysing the way the community participation agenda has been implemented in Haringey and Enfield, this debate will be returned to later.

Reviewing the main aspects of policy- making Sutton (1999) defines six cross- cutting themes (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Policy Process Cross- Cutting Themes adapted from Sutton (1995)

Cross - Cutting Themes	
The dichotomy between policy-making and implementation	The division between decision- making and implementation is based on the assumption that the decision- making activities are political, while implementation is an administrative activity. Despite this assumption policies often change as they move to the local level where they are implemented. <i>"Implementation always makes or changes policy to some degree."</i> Implementers are crucial actors whose actions determine the success or failure of policy initiatives. The separation of decision from implementation opens up <i>"escape hatches"</i> which allow policy makers to avoid responsibility.
The management of change	The complexity of the policy implementation process requires consensus building, participation of key stakeholders, conflict resolution, compromise, contingency planning, resource mobilisation and adaptation. It is important to identify both <i>"change agents,"</i> those who will lead change and explain it to others and build consensus towards it and <i>"barriers to change,"</i> as it is important to anticipate the reaction of individuals and groups to proposed changes.
The role of interest groups in the policy process	A crucial aspect of the policy process is what and who is included. Different interest groups exert different levels of power and authority over policy- making, influencing each stage of process from setting the agenda right through to implementation.
Ownership of the policy process	The ownership of the policy process is drawn away from local and indigenous groups to policy "experts" or "outsiders" (e.g. street level policy agents or bureaucrats that act as gatekeepers to government services). Crisis narratives are the primary means whereby experts claim rights to stewardship. Discourses can also be taken as an example of the capture and/or exercise of power by some sort of people, organisations or arguments against others. For example, who has the power to define dominant discourses, such as setting the terms of reference? Narratives and discourses control or marginalise the interests of indigenous target groups by labelling them as passive objects of policy rather than active subjects with agendas and ideas of their own.
The urge to simplify	There is a tendency for policy makers to simplify issues when making decisions in order to understand complex situations better. The main drawback of this is it can cause misinterpretation of a situation, producing false information upon which decisions are based. Simplification and de-politicisation of the policy process also creates a distance between policy makers and those affected by policy, creating a mechanism whereby policy makers are divorced from responsibility of the outcomes of a policy decision.
The narrowing of policy alternatives	The linear model of policy- making reviews all options considered which represent a possible solution to a problem. In contrast, there is a vast body of literature that suggests policy makers only consider a narrow range of options, not the full range that is theoretically possible. For example, policy makers do not consider options that would lead to radical change. This is because what is feasible politically is only incrementally or marginally different from existing policies. If there is a change in policy stance it occurs by a series of small steps rather than one radical change.

With respect to community involvement in urban regeneration using Sutton's (1999) model of policy- making a number of observations can be made. A key aspect of the policy process in the context of community involvement in urban regeneration policies is the process of "simplification." "Community" and "community involvement" mean something to all of us – we think we know what they mean, but they are notoriously hard to pin down. Thus it is not surprising that the definitions in urban regeneration

policies require some sort of "simplification," which ultimately leads to the misrepresentation (or differently understood representation) of issues, depending on the degree of simplification adopted. Other key aspects of the policy process in the context of community involvement in urban regeneration policies are the "ownership of the policy process" and "the role of interest groups," because it is crucial to consider who the local actors are, which ones have power and authority and what interests they represent, and who participates within the urban policy process and what their role is. The range of actors that participate in the urban policy process and the degree of power they exercise also impinge on the cross-cutting themes: "the management of change" and the "narrowing of alternatives."

Table 4.2: Three Levels of Policy Analysis in Urban Policy Source: Marinetto (1999) pp90-111

Levels of Policy Analysis	Description	Affects
The role of individual political agents	The influence of "ideological" priorities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ideas of individual policy agents have shaped the way urban problems have been identified 2. Development of solutions and remedies to urban deprivation have been influenced by prior assumptions 3. Formation & implementation have been informed by ideological notions about the best way for policy to proceed
The institutional context	The "delivery" structure of policy – How policy makers enact their priorities and goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the institutional mix can have a distinct influence over the delivery of policy. There are three main organisational paradigms which have been adopted: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Local authority centred model</i> – Local authorities are the natural vehicle for implementing policies from above. 2. <i>Centrally directed model</i> – The organisational centralisation & fragmentation of urban institutions. Decisions are directed and controlled by Whitehall departments and at the same time fragmentation is apparent in the organisational framework for delivering regeneration. 3. <i>Regional model</i> – "Creeping executive regionalism." Essentially the bureaucratic and administrative functions of central departments extend rather than devolve power.
The world outside urban policy institutions	"External forces" impinging upon the policy process - The wider socio- economic context of urban regeneration and the impact of uneven economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are beyond the immediate control of policy agents, influencing priorities, programmes and agendas. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Urban initiatives tend to intensify during periods of economic decline.

A further analysis of the policy process, using the case of urban regeneration is that devised by Marinetto (1999), who identifies three different levels to the policy process,

commenting that analysis needs to go beyond a descriptive chronology of policy development and that it is necessary to consider those factors that have influenced the general shifts in policy. He states "policy is the product of individual action and decision making in government, of conflict between various interest groups within and without the state and of constrictions placed by wider structural forces" p10-11 (see Table 4.2).

With respect to community involvement in urban regeneration using Marinetto's (1999) model of policy- making a number of observations can be made. Under his first level of policy analysis it can be seen that over the last forty years urban policy has been informed by a range of ideological priorities from a number of individual political agents. These include "social pathology" during urban policies of the 1960s, "urban entrepreneurialism" under the Thatcherite government of 1979, a "competitive bidding" paradigm under the later reign of the Conservative government during the early 1990s and "communitarianism" under the New Labour government.

Under Marinetto's second level of policy analysis: "the institutional context", it can be seen that under the different political periods different organisational paradigms have been adopted. For example, in urban policies of the 1960s the local authority centred model was ever present, while under the Thatcherite period of the late 1970s and 1980s the centrally directed model was adopted with a reduced role for local authorities. The "competitive bidding" paradigm under the later reign of the Conservative government during the early 1990s took to the regional model with a degree of local initiative allowed in a centrally managed "public sector market." Under the New Labour government a hybrid of the centrally directed model and the regional model appears to have been adopted. In the final level of policy analysis devised by Marinetto (1999) the world outside urban policy institutions becomes paramount, such as falling levels of political engagement and high levels of concentrated deprivation.

4.2 Discourses of "Community" and "Community Involvement" in Urban Policy

The substance of urban policy has been associated with three particular discourses of "community," according to Imrie & Raco (2003), Nash (2002) and Taylor (2002) (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Discourses of “Community” in Urban Policy**Sources: Imrie & Raco (2003) pp5-6, Nash (2002) pp2-3 and Taylor (2002) pp85-88**

	Community Can Be...⁵	Community Is...⁶	Community is Important For ...⁷
Geographical Construct	Object	Place	Reduction in social exclusion and rebuilding of slipping neighbourhoods
Policy Construct	Policy instrument	Agent	Breakdown of democracy and political legitimacy
Moral Construct	Created	Value	Breakdown of moral cohesion and responsibility

The first column in Table 4.3 illustrates Imrie & Raco (2003) typology of “community” discourse in urban policy, which variously refers to “community” either as an object of policy, a policy instrument or as a thing to be created. Similarly, Nash (2002) advocates that in order for policy to support community it requires policy to foster particular types of “local social relations” and as such existing policy initiatives use the discourse of “community” in three distinct ways: place, agent and value (see column two). In contrast, “community,” according to Taylor (2002) is seen as offering an alternative approach to three key policy concerns (see column three): the breakdown of moral cohesion and responsibility; the breakdown of democracy and political legitimacy; and most prevalently the reduction in social exclusion and the rebuilding of slipping neighbourhoods.

There is considerable overlap between these three different typologies, with three major discourses of community as geographical, policy and moral constructs.

“Community involvement” in policy is most often used to mean the involvement of people from a given locality or a given section of the local population in public decision-making (Atkinson, 2007). This is achieved by either inviting local residents as individuals to join or put forward their views to a council committee, area forum or a regeneration partnership or through the election or nomination of people to put forward the views of a particular group within the local population. Alternatively, in some cases “community involvement” can be used to mean no more than the provision of services by VCOs (see Table 4.4) (Chanan, 2003, Nash, 2002, Arnstein, 1969)

⁵ Column 1 illustrates Imrie & Raco’s (2003) Typology of “Community”

⁶ Column 2 illustrates Nash’s (2002) Discourses of “Community”

⁷ Column 3 illustrates Taylor’s (2002) “Community Importance” Typology

Table 4.4: Meanings of Community Involvement in the Policy Context
Adapted from Chanan (2003) p78

Meanings of Community Involvement	Intended Outcome	Usage in Policy Documentation
(1) The involvement of local residents in governance of regeneration plans, renewal strategy, LSPs or area or neighbourhood forum.	Linking Social Capital or Vertical Involvement	Dominant
(2) The involvement of VCOs in delivering public services.	This has three branching meanings, which are often confused. See below:	
(i) VCOs bidding for contracts to deliver part of a statutory service and accepting the standards and regulations that go with that.	Diversifies the range of statutory providers	Dominant
(ii) VCOs delivering a specialist professionally led service for which they obtain grant aid and accept a degree of regulation.	Diversifies the range of specialist services	This distinction is rarely made in policy
(iii) VCOs providing service by their own choice and effort, to their own objectives, mostly through voluntary activity but which may also seek grant aid because it is of public benefit.	Strengthens communities and increases social capital	This distinction is rarely made in policy
(3) The involvement of individuals in community activity: informal friendship networks, volunteering or voluntary organisations.	Horizontal Participation/ Bridging and Bonding Social Capital. Capacity building of the community sector as a major regeneration goal in itself i.e. to boost social capital at its roots.	Most neglected area: Little policy priorities this: subject of cross-cutting inquiry led by Active Community Unit of the Home Office; principal emphasis upon formal volunteering.
(4) Community Enterprise - commercial activity with social goals through a non- profit making business. In the non- commercial sense this is part of 2 (iii) and 3.	Commercial activity with social goals	Neglected: DETR paper published in 1999, but subsequent urban regeneration papers make little reference to community enterprises. Although, social enterprises have become an object of government policy.

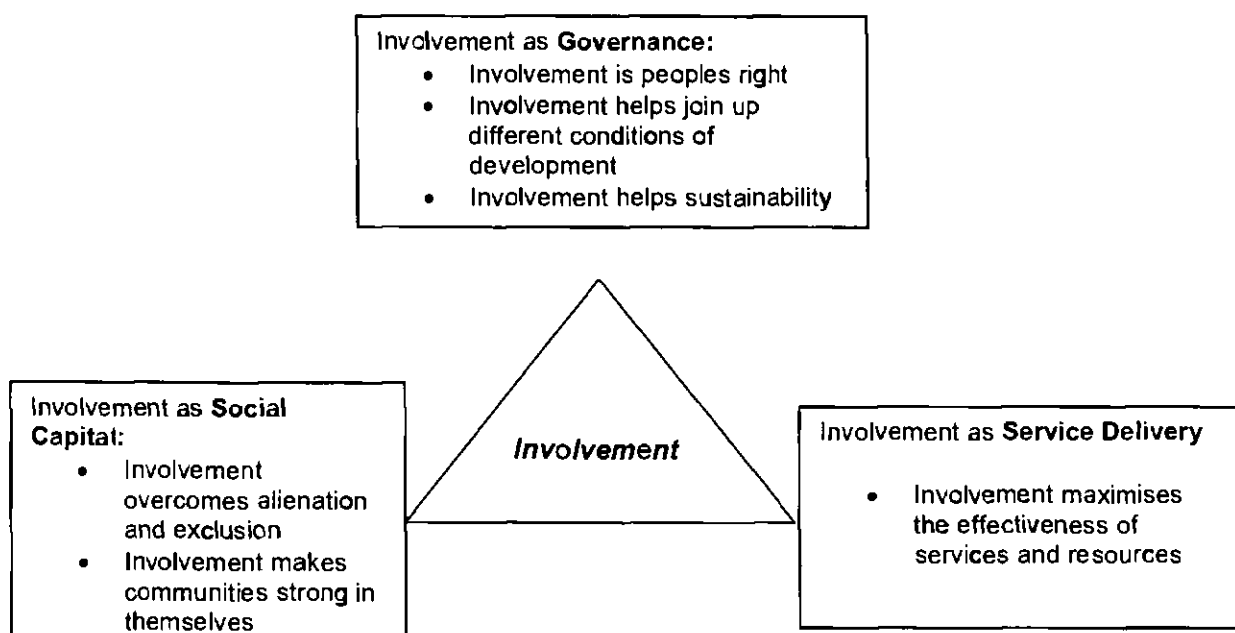
A meaning less prominent in policy is the involvement of people in “community activities.” These “community activities” are not about representation or participation in

local state led mechanisms, but about the "activities" themselves. They are not created with the sole purpose to involve people in public decision- making, but they can lend themselves to some extent to that purpose. For example, in places where "community activities" flourish a rich source of access to local public opinion and voluntary effort can be obtained. To date, most policy principles and implementation have only focused on the visible surface of "community activities," such as community representatives on partnerships and area forums and consultation exercises (i.e. vertical involvement or linking social capital). It is argued by Chanan (2003) that policy tends to fail to recognise that these expressions of local interest depend on an abundance of participation by "average" residents in "ordinary" community groups and networks (i.e. horizontal involvement or bridging or bonding social capital) and everyday activities.

4.3 Community Involvement Principles identified in Urban Policy

Chanan (2003) usefully identified six "community involvement" principles in the Urban White Paper *Our Towns and Cities: The Future – Delivering an Urban Renaissance*, to create a "triangle of the mutually enhancing community involvement objectives" of regeneration policy (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Triangle of the mutually enhancing community involvement objectives of Regeneration Policy
Source: Synthesised from Chanan (2003) p21



These "community involvement principles" will feature later in this chapter to identify whether these principles can be translated into the major urban policies of the Third Way. They also provide a set of benchmarks against which the experience of actually implemented community participation policies can be evaluated in the empirical chapters to follow.

Following the definition of key concepts in the context of the current policy framework, the approach adopted in the remainder of this chapter is to explain the evolution of VCS involvement in urban regeneration with reference to the broader political and economic changes within the UK, as there have been major ideological shifts in the approaches to policy, (as previously identified in relation to Marinetto's typology). In doing this, it draws upon the four main phases in the political arena as defined by Oatley (1998: p24), in order to illustrate how the past has influenced current practice and how the relative importance of the public, private, voluntary and community sectors has changed over the last forty years. This is summarised in Tables 4.5 and 4.6. This section therefore contextualises current policy aims and practices, so that we can see the experience, achievements and outcomes of current policy in perspective. The emphasis in this account is on the most recent (post 1997) period, when the expectations from the community participation agenda came to the fore in new policy initiatives.

Table 4.5: Definitions of Partnership, Third Sector Involvement and Phases of Urban Policy

Policy Phase	Period	Regeneration Metaphor & Quantity of Regeneration Schemes	Partnership Style & Definition	Welfare State & Third Sector Involvement
Social Democratic Consensus	1945-1978	"Reconstruction" Limited number of regeneration schemes	Partnerships between government & community groups (Community Development Projects). Inner Urban Areas Act 1978 Partnerships between central and local government.	Hey- day of welfare state, the voluntary sector became the state's junior partner complementing services provided by the public sector. The Left believed the state was the modern solution to social problems and hoped that the voluntary sector organisations would wither away. An explicit attempt was made to focus on community involvement as the centrepiece of urban policy, but the role of the third sector was marginal.
Urban Entrepreneurialism The Competitive Bidding Paradigm	1980's 1990's	"Renewal" or "Redevelopment" Moderate number of regeneration schemes. "Regeneration" Larger number of regeneration schemes.	Partnerships between the public sector (particularly central government) and the private sector. Multi- sector partnerships (including local government, TECs, private sector, voluntary sector, community groups & education sector).	Rolling back of the welfare state. Conservatives were much more attached to charities (subset of third sector) as organic social organisations, which represented the long-standing tradition of philanthropy and a sense of social order. However, they saw third sector organisations in a supporting non- innovative amateurish role to the state. Third sector involvement in the regeneration arena in the Urban Entrepreneurialism period was absent/ non existent, they were passive recipients. In the Competitive Bidding Paradigm third sector involvement was often/ largely tokenistic.
The Third Way Consensus	1997- To date	"Renaissance" Extremely large number of regeneration schemes.	Multi- sector partnerships with added emphasis on community involvement & capacity building. Principle of partnership is main focus of local governance and modernisation.	The third sector takes over former state roles. A professionalised, innovative and entrepreneurial sector of social organisations is seen as the vital ingredient in a modern welfare system. Social innovation holds the key to our social ills. Specific requirements for involvement of the third sector within the regeneration arena: (1) SRB bids needed to include plans for capacity building. (2) NDC encourages community led partnerships. (3) Third sector engagement is given priority in LSPs through the creation of the Community Empowerment Fund.

Source: synthesised from sources in the text

Table 4.6: Community Involvement Discourses Government Departments and Phases of Urban Policy

Policy Phase	Community Involvement	Dominant Discourses of Community in Government Policy Literature	Key Government Departments	Examples of Partnership
Social Democratic Consensus	Community involvement emerges as an issue during this political period.	Community as "geographical," "policy" and "moral" constructs	Home Office	Community Development Projects Inner City Partnerships – Newcastle Gateshead.
Urban Entrepreneurialism The Competitive Bidding Paradigm	Community involvement/ community capacity is seen as a means of reducing government expenditure. Community involvement is attributable of regeneration and marginal aspect of other services.	Community as a "geographical" construct. Community as "geographical" and "policy" constructs	DoE DETR GORs	<u>Urban Entrepreneurialism</u> UDCs – LDDC MDC <u>Competitive Bidding Paradigm:</u> City Challenge SRB Partnerships Rounds 1- 4
The Third Way Consensus	Community involvement is a central aspect of virtually every public service – Active Citizenship	Depending on the policy Community can be viewed as a "geographical", a "policy" construct and a "moral" construct	DETR/ ODPM/ DCLG • SEU • NRU Home Office HMT	SRB Partnerships Rounds 5 & 6. NDC Partnerships. LSPs Neighbourhood Renewal

Source: synthesised from sources in the text

4.4 The Social Democratic Consensus (1945-1978)

The emergence of Community Development Projects (CDPs) from 1968 and the Comprehensive Community Programmes (CCPs) from 1974 were the most explicit attempt to focus on community involvement as the centerpiece of urban policy during this period. The Skeffington report (1969) with its emphasis on participation within planning also reflected similar themes. CDPs and CCPs saw partnerships between the government and community groups. The emphasis of CDPs was on citizen involvement and "self- help." However, once in operation these perceptions shifted to structural causes of poverty and the emphasis shifted towards raising the people of deprived areas from what was seen as a "fatalistic dependence" on local council bureaucracies to that of independence and self- sufficiency (Lawless, 1981, Imrie & Raco, 2003, Duffy & Hutchinson, 1997). The delivery of this policy was via the creation of 12 local teams who were to work with the local deprived communities. However, despite initial commitment from the government sufficient financial or political resolve did not follow and in 1976 the Home Office terminated the experiment. Consequently, it was not until the Inner Urban Areas Act 1978 that the partnership approach began to dominate policy. (Bailey, 1994, Lawless, 1981, Colenutt & Cutten, 1994, Taylor, 2000)

The Inner Urban Areas Act 1978 was the first major attempt by government in the post war period to understand the nature and tackle the causes of the "urban problem," much of which mirrored the 1977 White Paper Policy for the Inner Cities (Hudson & Williams, 1986). The main aim of the act was to reverse the tendencies of decentralisation and redirect the bias in favour of the inner cities. The local authorities were seen as the natural agencies to tackle the "urban problem," assisting firms via loans and site clearance, although the policy focus was broadened to include economic and infrastructural needs with particular emphasis on the private sector. The voluntary sector was also to have a key role in improving recreational and community facilities (Atkinson & Moon, 1994).

The delivery of policy was through the creation of Inner City Partnerships between central and local government with the identification of seven partnerships in the major conurbations of Liverpool, Birmingham, Lambeth, London Docklands, Manchester- Salford, Newcastle- Gateshead and Hackney- Islington (these took priority in the Urban

Programme). Along with fifteen programme authorities and nineteen designated areas. The partnership approach was chosen rather than quasi government organisations, to ensure the involvement of the local community, to overcome localism and departmentalism and allow an approach centred on co-operation and consensus (Hudson & Williams, 1986, Atkinson & Moon, 1994).

It is hard to judge the effectiveness of these partnerships, given the rejection of the Labour government by the electorate in 1979. However, critics of this period believe these "partnerships" would now be considered a misnomer because local authorities dominated them with no more than token representation from other public sector agencies. There was no community representation, the voluntary sector was marginalised from policy making and resource allocation and the private sector was largely absent. The Inner City Partnerships very much reflected the view in the Inner Cities White Paper, that urban policy was basically the business of the local authorities, supported by central government. (Atkinson & Moon, 1994, Robinson & Shaw, 2000)

4.5 Urban Entrepreneurialism (1979- 1991)

During this period there was a shift in aims, content and delivery methods of urban policy. The policy focus in the 1970s was not on people and communities, but on poverty and physical regeneration. Initiatives of the 1970s shifted from the responsibility of the Home Office to the Department of Environment (DoE). In doing so the concerns of "social pathology" of the previous period gave way to an acknowledgement of spatial dimensions of deprivation and Area Based Initiatives (ABIs) with attention directed towards industrial and residential infrastructure rather than on the characteristics of inner city residents (Loney, 1983).

Policy development in this period proceeded on the basis that there was too much state intervention with rigid planning controls and high tax rates, which discouraged enterprise. The Thatcherite remedies to tackle "urban problems" mirrored their national economic strategy that included an enhanced role for the private sector; property led regeneration and the promotion of SMEs (Mohan, 1999). Policies in this period tended to focus around three key strands; the search for coordination, deregulation and liberation, and a development thrust (Lawless, 1989). Consequently, the state's role was reduced to a facilitator, creating the conditions for national and private sector led

growth. It was believed residents would reap the benefits via the "trickle down" effect (Edwards & Deakin, 1993, Colenutt & Cutten, 1994, Imrie & Raco, 2003)

During this period of political radicalisation, the meaning of partnership became one that involved the private sector and central government. Government centralisation was increased through the policy experimentation of Urban Development Corporations (UDCs). The first of these were introduced in 1980 under the Local Government Planning and Land Act with further rounds in 1987, 1988 and 1992 (Ward & Deas, 1999, Colenutt, 1990). Their aim was to lever private sector investment in urban areas, emphasising property led regeneration and marginalisation of local government. This was achieved via their powers of compulsory purchase and the fact that they were only accountable to central government (Imrie & Thomas, 1993, Mohan, 1999). Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) came to be seen as anti democratic and technocratic and were run by boards of directors primarily drawn from the private sector and civil servants (Imrie & Thomas, 1993, Deakin & Edwards, 1993). In fact, Michael Heseltine (Secretary of State for the Environment 1979-1983) drafted private sector advisors into the Environment department and civil servants and private sector appointees staffed all policy initiatives of this period. (Bailey, 1995, Cullingworth & Nadin, 2002)

The rhetoric of "self – help" and "voluntary action" were embraced by the government during this period because it believed statutory services should play a more secondary role. Local residents, inner city communities or the voluntary sector were not involved in the process; they were somewhat passive recipients of programmes, which were generally of little benefit to them. Research conducted by Robinson, Shaw & Lawrence (1999) cited in Robinson & Shaw (2000) indicates that at best local residents and the third sector were "consulted," and at worst they were the last to know what was happening. The discourses of "community" during this period illustrated a belief that community capacity ought to be developed as a means of reducing government expenditure. Yet this bricks and mortar approach to regeneration was criticised for its unbalanced nature, regenerating land and property but bypassing local residents (Robinson & Shaw, 1994). In many ways UDCs in practice went against the principles associated today with the term "partnership" (Bailey, 1995).

In 1988 the Action for Cities programme was launched to improve cross- departmental coordination at the national level, by rolling together a variety of programmes and introducing the new initiative City Grant (Harding, 1990, Brindley *et al*, 1989). The report "People in Cities" stressed the importance of the contribution, which local communities can make in revitalising the inner city. "Where the energy and enthusiasm of local people is given the chance to flourish, remarkable results can be achieved, even in the most deprived communities" (DoE, 1990 in Duffy & Hutchinson, 1997, p2). By the end of the 1980s public- private partnerships were more prominent, as the government realised the pure market solution had failed. The rationale for this political shift stemmed from the property collapse and the widely documented criticisms of the LDDC (Edwards & Deakin, 1992, Deakin & Edwards, 1993, Bailey, 1995).

4.6 The Competitive Bidding Paradigm (1991- 1997)

From the early 1990s emphasis was placed on targeting, competitive bidding and partnership, through the launch of the City Challenge in 1991 and the introduction of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) from 1994 (Oatley, 1998, Keyes, 1994). The City Challenge was introduced according to Michael Heseltine "to break the oxygen that feeds the dependency culture" cited in Oatley (1998 p 11). It required the partnership approach as a prerequisite for local authorities to bid for government funds. The City Challenge partnership boards were required to include public, private and voluntary sectors, and most significantly the local community. Consequently, these partnerships were multi agency partnerships or "three way partnerships" as opposed to the bilateral partnerships of the 1980s or the corporatist approach of the 1970s (Craig & Taylor, 2002). The money for the City Challenge was top- sliced from seven DoE programmes with winners receiving £37.5 million over a five -year period (plus match funding). Although, the emphasis on land and property remained, the regeneration plans had to relate to local issues, be of benefit to local communities, and actually involve local people. It also brought the local authority back into a lead "enabler" role (Robson, 1994, Atkinson & Cope, 1997).

Although local communities were seen as important partners in City Challenge partnerships and participation was given high priority there was no clear definition of their role. "Community involvement" at this time meant consultation with local residents,

either through public meetings and surveys or through voluntary sector umbrella bodies. In fact, local communities input and place in the management structures were variable and patchy. For many communities the City Challenge was seen as a missed opportunity for them to really orchestrate change for themselves. There was little consultation with residents prior to the submission of the initial action plan and limited involvement in delivering the strategies or decision-making processes (Taylor, 1995, Harding, 1996). It was the great speed at which City Challenge partnerships needed to respond to the invitation to bid that worked against much of the meaningful community participation. For example, only six weeks were given to prepare bids in the first round of the City Challenge in 1992. (Mabbott, 1993)

In the final City Challenge evaluation commissioned by the DETR the issue of community involvement is hardly visible. This disappearance of community involvement in the evaluation is difficult to explain given the clear inclusion of community involvement in the objectives, but it provides a clear example of the disappearing “community” in policy and programme trajectories. Despite this criticism, the City Challenge did give impetus to bring together the different sectors and create a new positive relationship between them (Mabbott, 1993). This led the national evaluation of the City Challenge to at least recognise that:

“There was a link between low levels of community involvement and poor partnership performance. A comprehensive regeneration programme cannot be imposed on local communities. Significant time and effort need to go into building capacity of local individuals and organisations so that they can be involved in design and implementation of the programme to maximise its success. Moreover, involvement and ownership by the community is needed to sustain the improvements after time- limited programmes, such as City Challenge have ended.” **DETR (1999a) p3**

The SRB essentially continued with the City Challenge model, but had the wider aim of simplifying grant applications and reducing bureaucracy by merging twenty programmes from five government departments and devolving decisions to Government Offices for Regions (GORs). The allocation of funds was on a competitive basis with bids required to come from locally based multi agency partnerships, concerned with defined small areas of need or large areas to capitalise the potential for economic development (Robson, 1994, Imrie & Raco, 2003). Stewart (1994) believes this created a “New Localism,” giving locals the chance to develop their own programmes and priorities rather than it being decided centrally i.e. a “government

hands off approach." However, it was believed by Robinson & Shaw (1994) that the "SRB represented a retreat if not the end of urban policy" p231, at that time because it no longer involved spatial targeting based on need, since anyone anywhere could bid on the basis of open competition. This spread of resources more widely and more thinly proliferated the number of local partnerships (Hastings, 2003).

The competitive bidding approach created winners and losers, only 31 out of 57 Urban Priority Areas were successful in the case of the City Challenge. The SRB was criticised for its "glamour principle" of spectacular bids favoured over need, as priority areas were abolished (Edwards, 1997). The competitive motivation of funding also meant that "communities" were bidding to be viewed as the worst off, discouraging positive discourse and imagery about place (Morphet, 2008). This contributed further to the stigmatisation of deprived communities (Dean & Hastings, 2000, Hastings & Dean, 2003, Cattell & Evans, 1999). Contrary to what the government stated in the SRB Bidding Guidance that: "bids should aim to harness the talents and resources of the voluntary sector, volunteers and involve the local community," there is an observable hierarchy of partners with the VCS marginalised (Nevin & Shinner, 1995 p311). The lead role tended to be carved up between the local authorities and Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs). Although community and voluntary groups were represented in 59% of SRB bids in the first two rounds, only nine projects had the voluntary or community sector as a lead partner in the first round of the SRB, (accounting for just 3.1% of the total SRB value). In comparison, the private sector was represented in 83% of the bids, the TECs were present in 76% of the bids and the local authority took the lead role in 75% of the bids (Oatley, 1998, Tilson *et al*, 1997, Hall, 2000). This evidence is also supported by a study conducted by CEEDR (1999) of thirty-six partnerships in the North London sub region.

There were a variety of reasons for the third sector being the least well represented of the major sectoral interests within these partnerships. These included their lack of experience in partnership working, limited financial and personnel resources and the low priority given to third sector involvement by lead bidders and GORs (Taylor, 1995, Harding, 1996). It is also advocated by many writers that there was a steep learning curve for VCOs in coming to terms with the bidding culture and the requirements of Government Regional Offices, as stated by a GOL Regeneration Director in North *et al* (2002). "The voluntary sector took a few years to learn how to play the game." (North *et*

al, 2002 p15) or indeed to be allowed to play the game. In London, the Government Office for London (GOL) encouraged the third sector to bid in the early rounds of the SRB and advised them to work closely with the Pan London Community Regeneration Consortium (PLCRC). The PLCRC was set up as a result of an SRB Round 2 bid with the purpose of providing a range of services to third sector organisations who wanted to become involved in regeneration partnerships and might at some point be in a position to lead bids.

It is clear that neither the City Challenge nor the SRB were designed to empower local communities to any significant extent, at best, they were more about keeping the local community "on side" as far as possible. Perhaps the main problem with partnerships in this period was that whilst third sector representation was being formally recognised within partnership arrangements as equal partners (in terms of representation at board level or signatures to bids), they actually lacked resources and technological knowledge to operate on an equal basis with other stakeholders (Raco, 2000, Mayo, 1997). The government seemed to play lip service to the idea without acknowledging the realities of the commitment. Few councillors were prepared to relinquish any substantial power, often stating that they represented the community. (Cameron & Davoudi, 1998, Copus, 2003)

The short timescales in which bids had to be prepared posed further problems for third sector partners, making real and meaningful partnerships virtually impossible. The short timescales prevented some partnerships from establishing links with potential VCOs, which resulted in them being excluded or included in name only. Consequently, the partnerships that were created were unequal, with the third sector very much the "junior" partners, responding to initiatives rather than being proactive (Atkinson & Cope, 1997, Tilson *et al*, 1997). It also meant partnerships got into the habit of chasing funds rather than developing strategy. The leverage ratios and output measures required also point back to the brick and mortar approach to regeneration. However, despite its limitations, the SRB, as it "developed" through different rounds, did shift towards much clearer recognition of the role of the VCS and as VCO respondents in a study conducted by Purdue (2007) stated: "We needed the SRB to understand our worth – almost like someone turned on the electric light" p137. Wilks- Haeg (1996) also believed the fact that the definition of partnership in both the City Challenge and the

SRB included reference to engaging and involving local communities marks a return to some of the stated values of earlier urban policy initiatives typical of the Social Democratic Consensus period.

4.7 Third Way Consensus (1997 - to Date)

4.7.1 Political Ideologies

The ideology of the "Third Way" relies heavily upon the third sector (which is neither state nor market), with the Prime Minister, Tony Blair stating:

"Volunteering is a key element in active citizenship and a thriving voluntary sector is crucial to civil society and to healthier communities. My argument is that the renewal of the community is the answer to the challenges of a changing world."

(Quoted in Levitas, 2000 p189)

Therefore, in this political period the new emphasis on the third sector and community development was linked to the wider objective of creating active citizens and a vibrant social economy to promote self-reliance, local initiative and reduce dependency on the state. Thus essentially the promotion of social entrepreneurship and capacity building shifted the responsibility away from the state to individuals in deprived communities, in terms of "rights and responsibilities" agenda (Imrie & Raco's, 2000). However, some fear that this emphasis on the third sector rather than the local state has led to reduced lines of accountability (Levitas, 2000).

The current "Third Way" (the continuing legacy of the Blair government) promotes a more comprehensive vision of urban regeneration, incorporating physical redevelopment, economic renewal, social inclusion and sustainability objectives. It relies on taking further the partnership approach between central and local state, the private and voluntary sector and citizens, to determine the content and delivery of regeneration. These partnerships are usually formally constituted as trusts or limited companies and an infrastructure to co-ordinate partnership working has been devised. However, the spread of the partnership approach as a prerequisite for government funds and resources has also led to less formalised partnerships. It was believed by government leaders that the failures of regeneration policies of the past are, due to "a joined up problem, which has never been addressed in a joined up way" Social

Exclusion Unit (1998) p9. The result has been relatively less emphasis on the private sector, local government in a central role and a renewed importance to community participation in regeneration (Geddes, 1997, Roberts & Sykes, 2000).

In the development of the New Labour agenda in relation to community participation, a number of key policies can be identified. These policies (see Box 4.1) are reviewed here in more detail.

Box 4.1: Third Way Urban Policies analysed using Chanan (2003) Community Involvement Principles

1. Single Regeneration Budget (see Box 4.2)
2. Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People/ Local Leadership Local Choice (see Box 4.3)
3. White Paper Our Towns and Cities: The Future – Delivering an Urban Renaissance (see Box 4.4)
4. HMT A Cross Cutting Review: The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery (see Box 4.5)
5. Bringing Britain Together/ National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (see Box 4.6)
6. New Deal for Communities (see Box 4.7)
7. Local Strategic Partnerships/ Community Strategies (see Box 4.8)

4.7.2 Inherited Programmes from the Competitive Bidding Paradigm

In some respects the policy responses of the Third Way Consensus demonstrate continuity with what went before in the Competitive Bidding Paradigm, while in other respects evolution is apparent. For example, the competitive bidding remained from the earlier period, but after 1997 was overseen by Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and was broader in scope, with 80% of resources focussed on 65 of the most deprived local authority districts (defined by the Index of Local Deprivation). From SRB Rounds 5 and 6, bids were encouraged to include capacity building among community groups during the life span of the scheme (spending up to 10% of the grant on this). It was envisaged that much of the first year of operation should be devoted to capacity building in order for the local community to play an effective and active role in the creation and management of the scheme. The importance given to “capacity building” led many SRB partnerships in Rounds 5 and 6 to set up community forums in the first few years of operation (Khamis, 2000). SRB partnerships could also opt to have a “year zero,” where no project spending occurred to allow time to engage with the community. Perhaps what is most interesting in the SRB 6 bidding guidance is that it appears to make a distinction between the “local community” and “the voluntary sector,” whereas

in previous bidding guidance "the voluntary sector" was subsumed within the all pervasive term: "local communities."

One factor evident in the development of the SRB was the lack of a clear definition of "community." Both the SRB 5 and SRB 6 bidding guidance have a glossary of terms, but "community" is not one of them, leaving it to the regeneration partnerships to decide which groups are relevant to the regeneration process. In some places the bidding guidance makes reference to particular groups that are deemed important such as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) (Purdue, 2007), local volunteers, the wider voluntary sector and faith-based groups, while other groups are not mentioned (such as disability groups etc.). The danger of such a wide definition in policy documents is that certain groups are bypassed. Only eleven out of nine hundred (1.2%) successful bids were granted to BME groups up until 2001 and similarly involvement in the SRB by disabled people has been extremely limited (Edwards, 2003, Edwards, 2001). It is apparent that, as time moved on, some SRB partnerships became led by the voluntary sector, and had more voluntary sector and BME partners, although the number of BME groups was still relatively low in the 1990s, particularly as lead agents. However, it also became apparent that the range of capacity building support available to voluntary sector participants in regeneration partnerships needed to be increased to ensure that they were confident to contribute in delivering schemes (London Regeneration Network Report, 1999).

Box 4.2: Community Involvement Aims in the SRB Rounds 5-6 Bidding Guidance

Governance:

Involvement helps join up different conditions of development: "Bids should engage the talents and resources of the whole community including black and minority ethnic groups, young people and all sectors of the voluntary sector including faith-based voluntary organisations, the wider voluntary sector and local volunteers." (SRB 6 Bidding Guidance, Para 1.42, p6)

Involvement helps sustainability: "It also helps to ensure that the benefits last over the long term by encouraging ownership of the scheme and identity with the area." (SRB 6 Bidding Guidance, Para 1.41, p6)

Social Capital:

Involvement makes communities strong in themselves: "Deprived areas do not always have well-established and effective partnerships or well mobilised communities. The Government therefore wishes to see a proportion of funding – up to 10% of resources per scheme – going to support community capacity building activity." (SRB 5 Bidding Guidance, Para 3.8, p4)

Service Delivery:

Involvement maximises the effectiveness of services and resources: "The Government places great importance on involving local people in regeneration activities. Community involvement enhances the effectiveness of regeneration programmes by encouraging better decision making, fostering more effective programme delivery, and helping to ensure the benefits of regeneration programmes are sustained over the long term." (SRB 5 Bidding Guidance, Annex E, p38)

From Box 4.2 it can be seen that four of the six principles of community involvement set out by Chanan (2003) were evident in the policies of SRB, with involvement being seen

as predominately governance and service delivery orientated. In this policy the discourse of community tended to be that of a geographical construct, rather than a policy construct, as it does not sufficiently define what groups make up a community.

4.7.3 New Policies: A New Role for Local Authorities and Communities?

In July 1998 the government published a White Paper entitled *Modern Local Government in Touch with the People*, followed by *Local Leadership, Local Choice* in March 1999. These then became the essence of the Local Government Act 2000. In essence the "Modernising Local Government" agenda aimed in principle "to extend democracy...involving the public is the key to effective, modern local government." (Hilary Armstrong MP, Minister for Local Government 1998, cited in Pinfield, 2000 p156) and ensure that local authorities were responsive to the needs of communities they serve. It was stated by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) (1998):

"There is no future for councils which are inward looking- more concerned to maintain their structures and protect their vested interests than listening to their local people and leading their community." **Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) (1998) p2**

Pinfield (2000) suggests that the rationale for this policy lay in the perception that people were generally disenchanted with political institutions and therefore, attempts to establish a new democracy may do better to start at the bottom, at the local level, and filter upwards; thus this policy focuses on how to change the culture of the local authority rather than how to build up the culture of the community. The Local Government Act (LGA) 2000 was an attempt to change local democratic systems, giving local people the opportunity to choose their own system from three options (an elected Mayor, cabinet with an elected leader or cabinet with an elected leader chosen by the majority party). Unfortunately, many local authorities restructured before it became law following the 1999 White Paper, so when the act came into being local authorities were required to merely consult on the structure. The vast majority of local authorities chose the same model: a cabinet with an elected leader chosen by the majority party.

The Local Government Act 2000 also encouraged Area Assemblies to be established in many localities. These area forums were given core council money via the "making the difference budget," to make people "feel" in control of their area. Area Assemblies, have

been progressively established in all local authorities that have neighbourhood renewal areas. They are supported by the council, (administration, minutes of meetings, chaired), but the intention is that they should be community – led. There are five main aims of these Area Assemblies: (1) to link city- wide and area based concerns. (2) To facilitate partnership working amongst key stakeholders, (3) to provide a vehicle for public involvement in council matters, (4) to complement LSP structures and (5) to help with local government modernisation by changing the embedded organisational cultures (Coaffee & Johnston, 2004, Morphet, 2008). They are thus part of the new infrastructure of community participation within the broad reach of local governance.

In reality these Area Assemblies have resulted in a series of tensions. For example, representative and participative democracy was compromised with many Area Assemblies resembling “mini town halls” and being dominated by locally elected members of the council. Many of the elected council representatives were unsure as to their new role. Training was required, but adequate funding and support was often not forthcoming. Area Assemblies were seen as the bridge between bottom- up and top- down visions of regeneration, which represented an ideological clash between the power of the community “voice” and the traditional “great and the good” within governance networks. Given the historical tensions between council’s and citizens, private consultants were brought in as a last resort to act as “honest brokers” and stimulate the process by drawing up new formations for the Area Assemblies (Morphet, 2008).

Box 4.3 summarises the Blair government’s intention for involving communities more in local government. It can be seen here that the main “community” based principles of these policies are Governance orientated. “Community” in these policies is something to be worked on by local authorities. “Community involvement” seems to be pushed to the margins once again in this policy document, as local authority leadership takes centre stage. The “modernizing local government” agenda, has been further updated by the Lyons “Place- Shaping: a shared ambition for the future of local government” review (2006). This review comments on community participation in terms of “parish” level governance and the notion of “double devolution” of power (i.e. not just devolution that takes power from central government and gives it to local government, but also power that goes from local government down to citizens and communities), which should

further provide a critical role for individuals and neighbourhoods, through the VCS (Lyons Inquiry into Local Government, 2006, Miliband, 2006).

Box 4.3: Community Involvement Aims in Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People (MLG) & Local Leadership, Local Choice (LLLC)

Governance:

Involvement is people's right: "Asking people how they want their community governed is not enough. It is right for local people to take decisions about new forms of local governance. This will give local communities real influence and power over the way in which they will be led" (LLLC, Para 2.9, p10)

Involvement helps join up different conditions of development: "There is an overwhelming need for greater cohesion and coherence at the local level of all those – private, business, voluntary bodies – whose activities and efforts can affect local communities." (MLG, Para 8.12, p63) "Although many councils have developed links with some of the bodies operating in their area, there is often a lack of cohesion between the various interest groups, and confusion over the powers of councils to participate with other stakeholders in partnership activities." (MLG, Para 8.22, p64)

4.7.4 Urban Renaissance: People Make Cities, but Cities Make Citizens?

In November 2000 the first White Paper on urban policy for 20 years was introduced by the DETR, entitled; "Our Towns and Cities: The Future – Delivering An Urban Renaissance" (the last being DoE (1977) Policy for the Inner Cities which led to the Urban Areas Act of 1978), (DETR, 2000). Much of its content reflects the findings of the Urban Task Force Report (1999) Delivering an Urban Renaissance. The White Paper had the vision of raising the standards of the environment and design, to improve the quality of life for people both in urban and rural areas. It claimed to put people first, stressing capacity building and local leadership. Unlike the Urban Entrepreneurialism period, it also sees the planning system as a mechanism for assisting regeneration rather than hindering it.

The notion of "community" is perceived in the Urban Task Force and the Urban White Paper as something that is created "naturally," is harmonious, and socially and culturally mixed. Thus the notion of "community" in these documents is both a geographical and policy construct. However, this conception of "community" contradicts any vision of diversity, difference and social inclusion. As Amin *et al* (2000) state: "it is a designer community, devoid of realities of conflict alienation" (p. 10). In fact, this contradiction, perceptively noted here in the comment on the White Paper proposals, is clearly evident in the actual local implementation of the policies derived from it, (see later chapters). Community involvement is woven through the White Paper Our Towns and Cities: The Future – Delivering an Urban Renaissance, enabling Chanan (2003) to identify six main community involvement principles, see Box 4.4. These six principles of

community involvement are perhaps the nearest thing we have to a comprehensive framework for government intentions on community involvement under New Labour.

Box 4.4: Community Involvement Principles of the White Paper Our Towns and Cities: The Future – Delivering an Urban Renaissance **Source: Chanan (2003) p20**

Governance:

Involvement is people's right: *"People have a right to determine their future and be involved in deciding how their town or city develops... It is not enough to consult people ... they must be fully engaged in the process from the start and ... everybody must be included (p32, Para 3.10)*

Involvement helps join up different conditions of development: *"Establishing a framework for effective partnerships to allow properly joined up strategies to be developed and implemented with local people and all the organisations involved in tackling local problems" (p31, 3.1)*

Involvement helps sustainability: *"A clear message from the regeneration initiatives of the last 30 years is that real sustainable change will not be achieved unless local people are in the driving seat" (p32, 3.10); Key to ensuring long term sustainable change is to involve the local community, the people who live and work in an area" (p108, 6.25)*

Social Capital:

Involvement overcomes alienation and exclusion: *"Local authorities need to engage local communities. Too often local people feel powerless to influence what happens in their community. They are daunted by, or alienated from, officialdom... We want to change this." (p33, 3.13)*

Involvement makes communities strong in themselves: *"(We intend) equipping people to participate in developing their communities" (p8); (We want) "councils that listen to, lead and build up their local communities" (p32, 3.11). "We are also seeking to increase community activity and volunteering through our new active community programme" (p110, 6.26)*

Service Delivery:

Involvement maximises the effectiveness of services and resources: *"We need local strategies developed with local people to meet the need of local people... voluntary organisations and other service providers with the common objective of improving quality of life." (p32, 3.11) "Without real commitment from the community we will not be able to make the best use of the resources available (p33, 3.13)*

What was disappointing in the Urban White Paper Implementation Plan was that community involvement was largely forgotten. However, at the Urban Summit in November 2002, which was scheduled to check the progress made two years on from the launch of the Urban White Paper, the Chancellor drew on the cross cutting Treasury Report: "The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery." At this point in time the government were shifting from community involvement of local residents in governance to VCS involvement in delivering part of the statutory service, with the opening sentences of the HMT report (2002) making reference to "community involvement" in the context of boosting the third sector's service delivery role, providing a new flexible cost- effective delivery of public services. Although, this development foregrounds the role of the VCO sector in local social policy and urban renewal, it does so at the risk that VCOs becoming involved in service delivery on behalf of the state may simply become incorporated into mechanisms of the public sector, gain little for their constituencies and lose their ability to challenge public sector decisions (Morphet, 2008). Thus the theme of "community involvement" becomes characterised by variable and shifting meanings.

The HMT (2002) report only fulfils one of the community involvement principles that Chanan (2003) identified, that of maximising the effectiveness of services and resources. However, in the report "service delivery" (rather than "involvement") is seen as important in "making communities stronger in themselves" and reference is made to "capacity building" enhancing the role of service delivery, showing a partial link to some of the social capital principles (see Box 4.5). In this Treasury led document the discourse of community is seen as a policy construct, a thing to be worked on to provide a cost- effective and flexible way of delivering public sector services.

Box 4.5: Community Involvement Aims in HMT A Cross Cutting Review: The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery

Service Delivery:

Involvement maximises the effectiveness of services and resources:

"Some hold that there are services – especially those to vulnerable or hard to reach groups that the VCS is especially better placed to deliver than either the state or the market... The VCS's ability to bring special skills and experience to service delivery – to bring its unique "added value" makes it the presumed provider of all public services." (Para 3.2, p15)

"VCO may be able to deliver services more effectively to certain groups because their particular structures enable them to operate in environments which the state and its agents have found difficult or impossible. VCO possess: Specialist knowledge, experience and skills; particular ways of involving people in service delivery whether as users, self- help or autonomous groups; independence from existing and past structures/ models of service; access to the wider community without institutional baggage and freedom and flexibility from institutional pressures." (Para 3.9, p16)

4.7.5 The Beginning of Neighbourhood Renewal?

New Labour also introduced a series of policies that linked community involvement to neighbourhood renewal as a result of the government's Social Exclusion Unit report: Bringing Britain Together, which provided the basis for the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSNR) (SEU, 1998, SEU, 2001). In reviewing the performance of previous regeneration and urban policies, the Social Exclusion Unit identified insufficient investment in people and the failure to harness community commitment, so the report set out to concentrate regeneration in the 88 local authorities (22 in London) containing the most deprived neighbourhoods, by bending mainstream service funds towards areas of need first via Local Public Service Agreements (LPSA) and second Local Area Agreements (LAAs).

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) were given a central role in the creation of LAAs in 2004 and during 2006 it was decided that local authorities should have a duty to prepare LAAs alongside LSPs and that "leadership" should be automatically conferred to local authorities. LAAs consist of a series of themes that have been negotiated by

local and central government around specific groups and communities. Between 2005-2009 these themes include: children and young people; safer, stronger communities; healthier communities and older people and local regeneration. From 2009 a “single pot” for funding in a locality will be implemented in order to give local government and LSPs greater flexibility in setting location based targets and assist in the rationalization of separate locally based funding initiatives. Early assessments of LAAs indicate that agencies have begun to work more holistically (Morphet, 2008).

The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal was perhaps the most concerted effort by government to turn community involvement aspirations into concrete reality. Here community involvement was not only a group of people or place (as advocated in the terms: geographical or policy constructs), but also emphasised “social relations” between them, thus in this sense “community” meant more than just neighbourhoods or locals, as it adopted a discourse of community around “morals.” However, the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal sometimes uses “community” as a synonym for neighbourhood, so there is some ambiguity in this document about what the term conveys (Atkinson, 2007) (see Box 4.6).

The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal shifted away from an exclusively area based focus to one of mainstreaming regeneration. It comprised an agenda of 105 government commitments to help realise this long-term vision, which covered the following themes: the local economy, health, housing, crime, and education. Fifteen of the 105 commitments were directly relevant to community involvement (see SEU, 2001, pp61-67). The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal shows a strong resemblance to the 1977 White Paper for the Inner Cities, as both are concerned with reviving communities and improving the provision of services in deprived neighbourhoods. (Nadin & Cullingworth, 2002, Imrie & Raco, 2003)

From Box 4.6 it can be seen that the most prominent objectives of community involvement in the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal policies were those around governance and social capital, while service delivery remains absent. However, all discourses of “community” are evident within the National Strategy of Neighbourhood Renewal.

Box 4.6: Community Involvement Aims in SEU Bringing Britain Together (BBT) and The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSfNR)

Governance:

Involvement is people's right: The government is committed to ensuring that communities' needs and priorities are at the fore in neighbourhood renewal and that residents of poor neighbourhoods have the tools to get involved in whatever way they want." (NSfNR, Para 5.26, p51)

Involvement helps join up different conditions of development: "Departments have worked at cross purposes on problems that require a joined-up response ... Government failed to harness the knowledge and energy of local people or empower them to develop their own solutions." (NSfNR, p7) "Action needs to be joined up locally, in a way that is accountable to communities and encourages them to take the lead. A central part of the strategy is the creation of LSPs which will bring together local authorities and other public services as well as residents, the private sector and community sector organisations." (NSfNR, Para 3.14, p28)

Social Capital:

Involvement overcomes alienation and exclusion: "My vision is of a nation where no one is seriously disadvantaged by where they live, where power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many not the few." (Tony Blair in NSfNR, p5)

Involvement makes communities strong in themselves: "Too much has been imposed from above, when experience shows that success depends on communities themselves having the power and taking the responsibility to make things better." (BBT, p1).

4.7.6 New Deal for Communities

The NDC, which formed part of the NSNR, initially had a budget of £2 billion for seventeen first round "Pathfinder" partnerships and twenty- two second round "Pathfinder" partnerships, to be spent over ten years, with the aim that they should become "showcase models" of what can be achieved. Each partnership has been allocated funding of between £35 million and £60million. The NDC areas were chosen according to the Index of Local Deprivation (ILD) and reflected a regional spread of neighbourhoods across England, with at least one local authority area in each region and more where deprivation was concentrated. After the selection of the thirty- nine areas local residents were invited to choose which neighbourhood within that area would receive NDC funding.

The concept of the New Deal for Communities is area regeneration (focused on small neighbourhoods of between 1,000- 4,000 households) with an even greater emphasis on local community involvement. The programme gave flexibility to the local partnership to define its own objectives and practices (providing they were within the priorities listed by the DETR), its way of working and its actions, although its delivery plan required approval from central government. The New Deal for Communities programmes had a duration of ten years with a built in delivery phase to allow more time to involve the local community and other partners effectively. The partnership boards running these regeneration programmes have representation from the public, private, voluntary and

community sectors, but the government insists that it is the community that holds the "real power." As the government guidance for setting up a New Deal for Communities programme and the SEU (1998) report stated:

"Proposals which are imposed on communities won't work and won't be supported under the NDC. We want to ensure that all individuals and community groups affected by the proposals are fully engaged in their planning and their implementation...retaining the involvement and support of the community should be a priority throughout the life of any regeneration scheme."
DETR (1999b) p6

It is questionable whether the principles of the NDC may have been expected to apply to the whole National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, but when the full strategy emerged local flexibility was firmly disowned by the setting of floor targets on employment, health, housing, safety and education. The setting of national floor targets resulted in Whitehall departments for the first time being judged on areas where they were doing worst rather than on the national average, although the principle of community involvement remained, it suffered some "constructive demotion," according to Chanan (2003), as there was no "community involvement" in setting floor targets. Instead community involvement was fostered on the grounds that it would assist with the achievement of certain floor targets in the various thematic groupings. Consequently, it came as no surprise that the development of community indicators to assess the level of "community involvement" lagged behind mainstream issues by several years. (New Economics Foundation, 2001)

The first phase of the National Evaluation of the NDC programme (2005) revealed that partnerships had generally improved channels of communication with the community, with 79 % of residents having heard of the local NDC and over half thought it had improved the area. Residents were impressed with what their local partnership was doing. This is demonstrated by the finding that the average turnout for resident board elections was in some locations higher than the average local government elections. Despite this representatives were still unclear as to who they represented, with comments such as "I say my piece, but I don't know that I'm right or truly representative. I don't speak to that many representatives" (Howard & Sweeting, 2007 p116). Trust appears to exist amongst the community in relation to local institutions, notably the local authority and the police. 53% of residents also trusted their local NDC, but this has not yet fed through to actual involvement in VCOs. By 2004, levels of trust in NDCs were higher than for local authorities. BME groups also revealed positive

attitudes towards their local NDC community (Grimshaw & Smith, 2007, ODPM, 2005, NAO, 2004, Walker, 2004, Loney, 2004)

The National Evaluation of the NDC programme revealed a number of constraints that tended to limit community engagement, perhaps an indication that too little attention was paid to the consequences of such a heavy commitment to community engagement. Some residents thought NDCs were “cliquey” and for the few, offering ‘lip service’ to consultation, and provided communities with little influence over decisions. Methods of communication were criticized for not being sufficiently detailed, and inconsistently distributed. Residents wanted more information on the organisation of the partnership in terms of who does what, more transparency about funding decisions, and more information on current or planned projects (ODPM, 2005).

A strong emphasis on engagement with BME communities appears to have undermined concern for other forms of equalities and diversities, notably gender and disability. This has also led many residents to question whether projects should be targeted at specific communities, in the interest of establishing community cohesion. Most NDCs have encountered problems in engaging with some groups in their area because of their longstanding, tense relationships with service agencies, which have been difficult to change. Problems were also reported regarding resentment directed at government’s control, as NDCs were seen to be dominated by central government directives over what the form and character of local community based regeneration programmes should be. There was also considerable resentment of the highly paid consultants brought in to regenerate the deprived neighbourhoods. To some, NDCs have been dubbed the “New Deal for Consultants.” Local residents felt that the NDCs in principle advocated local residents “know best,” but in practice professional outsiders, parachuted into communities and who were not part of the fabric of a neighbourhood’s social capital, “knew better.” This indicates there is a distinction between those that know what needs to be done and those that can do it (ODPM, 2005, Weaver, 2002).

Dominant socio-demographic characteristics such as new and transient populations and intra community strife (e.g. Braunstone Community Association, Leicester), institutional history and failures of previous regeneration schemes to improve the area, have also undermined engagement. Nevertheless, on a broader scale there is no doubt that the NDC programme has made far more of an attempt to engage with, all sectors

of the community than any previous initiative (Howard & Sweeting, 2007, ODP, 2005, Cullingworth & Nadin, 2002, Jones, 2003, Wilks- Heeg, 2003).

From Box 4.7 it can be seen that the six principles of community involvement identified by Chanan (2003) informed the development of the NDC policy. This illustrates that community involvement in this policy was all encompassing (including governance, service delivery and social capital aims).

Box 4.7: Community Involvement Aims in the New Deal for Communities (NDC)

Governance:

Involvement is people's right: "In each area we are inviting community based partnerships to form and take responsibility for regeneration of one neighbourhood." (DETR Overview, p3)

Involvement helps join up different conditions of development: "NDCs will provide joined-up solutions to joined up problems." (DETR Overview, p2) "The programme will be run by local partnerships that have at its core local residents, community and voluntary groups, but which also include business, the local authority and other public bodies." (DETR Guidance, p7)

Involvement helps sustainability: "Communities must be at the heart of the regeneration process to ensure its sustainability into the future." (NRU Factsheet, p3) "It also means harnessing the active involvement of the local community – not only during the lifespan of the programme, but afterwards as well." (DETR Overview, p1)

Social Capital:

Involvement overcomes alienation and exclusion: "The NDC places a particular emphasis on involving all elements of the local community from the outset. Plans imposed on a community, which are not developed with them and win their support, won't deliver lasting change... They must be involved in the identification of problems and needs and in the development of the regeneration scheme. And we look to public agencies and bodies to support and develop community involvement at every stage." (DETR Guidance, Para 1.7, p8)

Involvement makes communities strong in themselves: "By forging strong alliances and ploughing back the knowledge and experience gained, NDC aims to increase the capacity of local people to take charge of their own future." (NRU Factsheet, p1)

Service Delivery:

Involvement maximises the effectiveness of services and resources: "The partnerships aim to ensure that improvements to services and facilities meet the needs of the whole community." (NRU Factsheet, p4)

4.8 Local Strategic Partnerships and Community Empowerment Networks

The creation of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) was a further component in the development of the government's neighbourhood renewal strategy and form part of their wider reform to improve the quality and responsiveness of public services. The initial aim of Local Strategic Partnerships was to rationalise partnership initiatives in any one locality and address the problem of "initiative-itis," via promoting an additional strategic tier of partnership as the solution (Bailey, 2003). Local Strategic Partnerships are cross- sectoral partnerships, which "provide a single overarching local coordination framework within which other partnerships can operate" (DETR, 2000a, p1). LSPs are expected to include a balanced representation from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors, involving some or all of the following: residents, community groups,

voluntary organisations, faith communities, local councillors, private sector and business organisations and various public sector organizations and statutory agencies (SEU, 2001, p45). In particular,

"Effective engagement with communities is one of the most important aspects of the LSP's work and they will have failed if they do not deliver on this... LSPs are not only to welcome involvement from these organisations and individuals, but actively seek them out."

SEU (2001) Para 5.28 & 5.29, p51

"LSPs should ensure that community and voluntary organisations and the wider community are in a position to play a full and equal part in multi-agency partnerships on the same basis with statutory authorities and better resourced partners."

DETR (2000a) p16

Local Strategic Partnerships have four core responsibilities: Firstly, local authorities are required to prepare and implement a community strategy for local areas (provided by the Local Government Act 2001) and the LSP is expected to engage (i.e. involve rather than consult) local people in the development of these community plans in order to deliver policy at the local level. Secondly, LSPs are to develop and deliver a local neighbourhood renewal strategy to tackle deprivation. Thirdly, they are to co-ordinate local plans, partnerships and initiatives and provide a forum for local authorities, the police, health services, central government and other agencies. Finally, LSPs are to work with local authorities to develop service agreements. (DETR, 2001b, Newman, 2001, McInroy, 2001, Greater London Enterprise, 2003)

Annex C of the Government Guidance for LSPs distinguishes between two of the aims that have been addressed in the Urban White Paper and the cross cutting Treasury Report, but which are often confused elsewhere in both government and non-government literature. "There are two quite different ways in which people working in the community and voluntary sector groups might be involved in an LSP. The first category relates to their role in providing services for their own members and for other local people and the second category relates to their role in speaking for local people." DETR (2001b) (para 13-14).

The Home Office was responsible for making proposals on how VCOs could be represented in the LSP framework. The Home Office initially suggested that Councils for Voluntary Services (CVS) should put forward representatives. However, not every local authority Borough has a CVS because some lack local authority support or indeed

community support. Consequently, the Home Office's next idea was the creation of Community Empowerment Networks (CENs), which included tenants, residents associations, voluntary and community organisations and faith groups. The next step was to identify the managing agents/ Lead Organisations (LO) for these CENs. Where there was a respectable CVS they became the management agents for the CEN and as all CENs in the UK are CVS run, except Haringey (one of the case studies for this thesis) and Preston, which both went out to competitive tender. The intention was that the managing agents/ Lead Organisations would become redundant once the CENs were properly in place.

The areas eligible for Neighbourhood Renewal Fund were also eligible for the various Community Participation Programmes (CPC): (1) Community Empowerment Fund to support Community Empowerment Networks as a route to engage communities effectively in LSPs; (2) Community Chest and Community Learning Chest funding providing easily accessible grants to support self-help and community activity and the development of skills, knowledge and community learning. The Community Chests, worth £50 million in total, funded local small grant schemes to formal or informal community groups in the 88 most deprived areas, so that communities could take the first steps towards more formal involvement in neighbourhood renewal and run their own projects. The Community Chests were largely initiated (according to the SEU (2001)) because it was realised that for many residents the first step towards community involvement was likely to be through participating in community self-help and mutual support activity. The Voluntary Sector Investment Fund of Her Majesty's Treasury was used to address the barriers of effective service delivery, assist in modernising the sector for the future and enhance local communities capacities to assist in the delivery of welfare services. (Government Office for London, 2002, HMT, 2002, SEU, 2001)

The Community Participation Programme started late in 2001-2002, which meant many management agents/lead organisations were still recruiting staff and setting up activities during the second year. This bureaucracy and inappropriate timescales led to an extension until 2006. A review of the Community Participation Programmes in 2002-2003 led to them being combined in the Single Community Programme (SCP), which ran until March 2006. After that, the Single Community Programme was integrated into

the Stronger and Safer Communities Fund to be administered by local authorities. Now this forms part of the Area Based Grant (introduced in 2008) to give local authorities greater flexibility in deciding local priorities for spending. This transfer of power, back to local authorities has "reawakened" uncertainty amongst many VCOs about their ongoing role, as the case studies in the subsequent chapters show.

Each LSP in the 88 NRF areas was eligible for £40,000 over three years from the Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) (over £35 million in total) to help reduce the distance between LSPs and local community organisations and allow genuine engagement of the third sector, as there was a recognition that support for the third sector was under resourced and the CEF would go some way in equalising partnerships. The regional Government Offices paid this money as directly as possible to third sector organisations in the 88 most deprived areas. The Community Empowerment Fund covers outreach work to raise awareness and involve the widest possible range of interests, facilitation for eliciting community views and procedures for choosing VCO representatives for the LSP, ongoing training and support for these individuals, two way dissemination of information, communications such as via forums, newsletters and websites and opportunities for developing ideas, proposals and contributions to the strategic planning process. The vast majority of CENs elect their representatives, but some combine elections and nominations, partly to recognise the appropriateness of a "participatory" rather than "representative" model. Many CENs have also adopted "allocations" on the LSP board to different kinds of organisations (i.e. voluntary and community, BME/faith, communities of interest and neighbourhood based fora) (Government Office for London, 2002, West, 2001, Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), 2001)

The Community Participation Programme Evaluation (2003) revealed that there were very different approaches to developing a CEN. Only just over one third had a written constitution, some had no membership structure or operated through databases, over one third had no eligibility criteria for the membership and where there were criteria, they were often very broad. Some were networks of networks, with the networks distinct from their individual organisations counting as members, whereas others counted all the constituent groups as members. About 40% had individual as well as

group members, and they varied in whether local authority and/or LSP officers were invited to attend all CEN meetings.

The National Evaluation of LSPs undertaken by the ODPM (2005) reveals significant progress had been made with the establishment of CENs. The report concluded that they have increased cohesion within the sector and allowed VCOs to be more systematic and strategic and created new spaces where links can be made between different interests. CENs have helped overcome the sense of isolation many groups feel and raised their profile within the sector. They have also gone some way in reducing the sector's competitiveness (i.e. rivalry and lack of co-operation) and the extent to which groups see others as rivals or a threat, thus building trust, and social capital amongst VCOs. The fact that VCOs have established a place on the LSP is an achievement in itself. But they also recognise it brings various other benefits, which include gaining knowledge and awareness of policies and plans, building trust with and gaining recognition from other sectors, being consulted, and having access to decision makers.

Despite this the National Evaluation of LSPs ODPM (2005) also reveals a series of significant challenges facing VCS involvement. For the VCS the main question concerning their participation is the cost of partnership working and whether the outcome is commensurate with all the efforts expended (Atkinson, 2007, Liddle & Townsend, 2003). Secondly, there are challenges of involving the most marginalized or "hard to reach" groups, particularly with regards to increasing the "bonding" within the BME sector and building bridges between it and the infrastructure of the rest of the VCS. Another challenge is to make effective links between the voluntary and community sectors, as some CENs appear to be focused on one or the other. According to the National Evaluation, many have made strenuous efforts to target smaller informal or grassroots organisations, but sometimes at the expense of the voluntary sector or the larger more professional service delivery based organizations, a complete contrast to the case studies expressed in subsequent chapters and Atkinson's (2007) study.

The National Evaluation of LSPs ODPM (2005) also pinpoints that VCOs still feel that they are the "junior partners," and that they have not yet overcome all the misconceptions about the role of the VCS and that they are not exercising "real"

influence within LSP/ CEN structures. The timing of different developments is seen as important here, because the Community Strategy and local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy processes were in place before the CENs were set up, so that in some places (like Haringey) the VCS had to find a way into arrangements that were up and running. In addition, many VCOs also perceived "LSPs as creatures of local government" (Atkinson, 2007, p73), i.e. to have a very close alignment with the local authority, which has affected the influence and effectiveness of VCO involvement (the extent of this "dominance" is dependent on VCOs experiences of participation in the past) (Liddle, 2001, Liddle & Townsend, 2003, West, 2001, Russell, 2002).

The ODPM (2005) evaluation also indicates that the influence of CENs over local decision- making has been limited so far. However, it indicated that VCS involvement in LSP structures, particularly at the theme groups may provide the greatest opportunity for the VCOs to exert influence, but this was "patchy," depending on subject matter of the theme group and chairs that were sympathetic towards the VCS, showing similarities with the case studies which follow in subsequent chapters. There also appeared to be a danger of VCOs viewing the LSP "too hierarchically" (i.e. the best place to be was perceived to be at the board level) or "too economic" rather than social in outlook (Liddle, 2001, Liddle & Townsend, 2003, West, 2001, Russell, 2002)

The patterns of VCS representation on LSPs in terms of the types of organisations involved, their level of representation and the means of selection were equally varied, within the National Evaluation (including whether BME/ faith communities, came through separately or through the VCS). The LSP guidance does not distinguish between voluntary and community organisations, but there are important differences that have implications for LSPs (i.e. their degree of engagement, the support required and their potential contribution). The way in which VCOs relate to their wider constituency has been a longstanding issue for the VCS in terms of how representative they are, and what model of representation is being applied, so it comes as no surprise to have continued into the LSP/ CEN related structures. Ultimately, this raises questions as to whether VCO representatives see themselves as representatives and accountable to a given constituency or rather bringing a particular individual perspective to the decision making process. The VCS tends to utilise the representative democracy model, which poses greater demands on representatives to be mandated

by, and feedback to their constituencies. It has also resulted in many members having unrealistic expectations, because they fail to recognise the difficulties this involves (ODPM, 2005, Bailey, 2005).

There are also issues for the sector itself in terms of how it defines itself. These include whether faith organizations should be considered separate from the VCS, and what type of role infrastructure organizations will perform in the future. The emphasis on community engagement may mean advocacy type organisations are more likely to get drawn in than the larger service delivers and if this is the case, it remains to be seen how they will retain their critical edge, whilst carrying out partnership responsibilities. It also raises the question as to where voluntary organisations that perform service delivery roles contracted by public sector agencies for an LSP fall, within the VCS or the sphere of service providers. (ODPM, 2005)

Other factors affecting the VCOs involvement identified by the National Evaluation included limited time and resources, the culture of partnership working, and the uncertainty about the role of the VCS within the LSPs from both the VCOs themselves and other sectoral partners. Many found it difficult to understand and fulfill their roles and felt ill equipped to bring a "strategic" view to the decision making table, often because it was not where their interests lie. The way in which meetings were run reinforced the VCOs "junior status" (i.e. long agendas, late papers, jargon, the way meetings were chaired and the style of debates). Since the rules of the "partnership game" were written by others to suit others, VCOs were less attuned to partnership working, partly because often organisations are more accustomed to competing for resources than they are collaborating, and there appeared to be a need to move away from seeing the LSP as a channel to confront others through. Thus it would seem taking steps towards greater trust and integration within the sector may be as much of a pre-requisite as building infrastructure and capacity (ODPM, 2005, Liddle & Townsend, 2003, Atkinson, 2007).

Responses from other sectors were varied, some felt that the VCS were "strong on talk, and no action," "provided no resources, so had no clout," "were not relevant at county level" and "were not doing as much as they could." Whilst other partners felt the VCS makes a valuable contribution, particularly in terms of the distinctive perspectives that

VCO representatives can bring in terms of engaging deprived communities and excluded groups and having an equal voice, but recognized the difficulties of obtaining representation from such a large and diverse sector (ODPM, 2005). These conclusions offer a number of benchmarks and potential comparisons for this research, when it looks at the workings of the CENs in Enfield and Haringey.

There remain several unanswered questions about the structure and remit of LSPs. For example, equality between partners has become “blurred” with local authorities having an enhanced and pivotal role. The large number of partners involved also makes working by consensus problematic. It also raises questions about constitution because members of LSPs make decisions about budgets, which seems to undermine the role of elected councillors. In addition, there are difficulties in matching local concerns to strategic borough wide concerns.

There also appears to be a tension in the government’s analysis in terms of how notions of “community” and “community involvement” are used by government in relation to different spatial scales. The LSPs and the neighbourhood renewal agenda illustrate quite different and contradictory conceptions of the characteristics of poor communities, indicating it depends on the social scale under focus. For example, according to Newman (2001) and Hastings (2003) at the neighbourhood level communities seem to be characterised by a “surfeit of troubling characteristics,” while at the spatial scale of the local authority “communities are a wealth of resources and activity.” This is because the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal is targeted at deprived areas or communities (i.e. by definition “problem areas”). This is a problem that is clearly emerging from the conflation of discourses relating to social exclusion/ neighbourhood renewal/ communities (object) and community as a “value.”

There are also different constructions of the problem at these different spatial scales. For example, at the neighbourhood level policy stresses the need to invigorate the initiative, skills and networks of residents. In contrast, at the scale of the local authority the same residents are reservoirs of energy, experience and creativity, which are “untapped” by other participants and need to be drawn into effective change. This may be due to the fact that the “technologies of government” are part of a broader agenda of the “modernisation of local government.” As Hastings (2003) states:

"Community participation at the neighbourhood level is conceived of as a means to refresh the relationships within civil society, community participation at the strategic level is a means to renew and refresh the relationships between civil society and the local state."
Hastings (2003) p98

From Box 4.8 it can be seen that four of the six principles of community involvement identified by Chanan (2003) are evident in the LSP policy. The LSPs therefore have mutually enhancing community involvement objectives with involvement being seen in this policy as governance, service delivery and social capital. This is to be expected given that this policy stems from the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. However, the LSPs discourse of "community" differs substantially from that of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, largely portraying community as both a "geographical" and "policy" construct. LSP policies only refer to the group of residents that will be "involved," and it is through the "community" that the policy has been devised and activated; it does not refer to community as a "moral construct."

Box 4.8: Community Involvement Aims in Local Strategic Partnerships and Community Strategies

Governance:

Involvement helps join up different conditions of development: "Public, private, community and voluntary sector organisations all have a part to play in improving quality of life. The more they can work together, with local people the more they can achieve." (p. 4)

Involvement helps sustainability: "The more likely it is that economic, social and physical regeneration happens and is sustained in deprived areas." (p. 4) *"Involving local people and communities is vital for the successful development and implementation of community strategies and neighbourhood renewal strategies and key to achieving lasting improvements."*

Social Capital:

Involvement overcomes alienation and exclusion: "LSPs are collaborative partnerships where each member is an equal partner. Each partner will have a different contribution to make and his or her worth needs to be acknowledged. Resources, responsibilities and duties may differ, but the value to the LSP of each partner has to be recognised." (Para 1.31, p15) *"LSPs should therefore, ensure that community and voluntary organisations and local people more widely are in a position to play a full and equal part in multi-agency partnerships on the same basis with statutory authorities and better resourced partners."* (Annex C, p69)

Service Delivery:

Involvement maximises the effectiveness of services and resources: "Public services work better and are delivered in ways which meet people's needs." (p. 4) *"The level of community and voluntary sector activity is often a gauge of the social health and spirit of that area and as such is a vital complementary strand to the provision of decent public services and a quality environment in changing people's lives."* (Annex C, p69) *"The second main reason for having community and voluntary sector people serving as members of the LSP is their knowledge of the impact of service provision on local people."* (Annex C, p70)

Table 4.7: Selected Key Policy Documents under New Labour with a "Community" Focus

Policy Document	Government Department	Community Aim	Constructs of Community		
			Geographical	Policy	Moral
SRB Rounds 5- 6 (1997)	DETR (later ODPM)	Governance Service Delivery Social Capital			
Modern Local Government: In Touch with the Local People (1998)	ODPM	Governance			
Local Leadership Local Choice (1999)	ODPM	Governance			
Urban Task Force Report: Towards an Urban Renaissance (1999)	DETR (later ODPM)	Governance Service Delivery Social Capital			
Urban White Paper: Our Towns & Cities The Future Delivering an Urban Renaissance (2000)	DETR (later ODPM)	Governance Service Delivery Social Capital			
The Role of Voluntary & Community Sectors in Service Delivery: A Cross Cutting Review (2002)	HMT	Service Delivery			
Bringing Britain Together (1998)	SEU	Governance Social Capital			
National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (2001)	SEU	Governance Social Capital			
New Deal for Communities (1998)	DETR (later ODPM)	Governance Service Delivery Social Capital			
Local Strategic Partnerships/ Community Strategies (2000)	DETR (later ODPM)	Governance Service Delivery Social Capital			

4.9 Chapter Conclusions

As the previous discussion of New Labour policies has demonstrated, there has been a notable development of discourses of “community” and “community involvement.” Table 4.7 summarises the key policy documents under New Labour that have a “community” focus and the key government departments that are responsible for these policies. It summarises the community aims (whether they are governance, social capital or service delivery orientated) and the discourse of community (whether they are geographical, policy or moral constructs) of these policies.

There are a number of paradoxes in the New Labour Third Way government's approach to urban regeneration and community involvement. Firstly, a commonality across all policy areas can be identified, that community involvement is intrinsically seen as a “good thing.” The “dark side” to the norms of community involvement (i.e. tight knit communities can be oppressive, and exclusive, just as they are supportive and inclusive) and its association with power and politics are ignored (see Taylor, 1995, Taylor, 2002, Atkinson & Kitrea, 2002, Cooke & Kothari, 2001).

Second an inevitability of the policy process is a shift from ideas to outputs and as a result “simplified” definitions of “community involvement” occur. For example, the pace of change was substantial in New Labour's first administration, between 1997 – May 2001 because Labour had been in opposition to the Conservative Party for 18 years, giving them a considerable length of time to develop the foundations of their ideology and as such the policies from 1997- 2001 illustrated a focus on “ideas” and ideologically driven policy initiatives. In contrast, in New Labour's second administration, from June 2001 onwards, new policies continued to come on line (most noticeably around service delivery), but at a much slower rate with the ideology of community participation already firmly rooted in its policies. In New Labour's second administration there was an evident policy shift from “ideas” towards “implementation” and “outcomes” of delivery. Similarly, the periodic disappearance of “community” in policy documentation probably stems from the fact that as programmes moved from principles to action plans and from action plans to implementation, the recipients at these various stages concentrated on the structured and budgeted points rather than the vision and the principles (Goodlad, 2002, Taylor, 2002, Sutton, 1999).

Thirdly, important differences can be identified in terms of departmental approaches and priorities, with policies under New Labour coming from different places or starting points. For example, the NDC offered total flexibility of scheme objectives in order to maximise involvement, yet the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal as a whole imposed obligatory priority issues/ objective targets. Community Strategies (2000) emphasised a leading role for communities, but the White Paper "Modernising Local Government: In Touch with the People" (1998) emphasised local authority leadership and had little to say about community involvement. The Treasury report on the role of the third sector (2002) focused on capacity building plans for service delivery, but not for the general growth and strengthening of the community. We have seen from this chapter that "community involvement" disappears from view intermittently and frequently takes different stances or meanings, depending on the perspectives of the people and institutions that have used them (e.g. whether it is GOL, ODPM, DETR, HMT, HO etc.) This results from the lack of clarity about what it is, and as a consequence lacks distinct objectives and measurements. As we saw in Table 4.4 at the beginning of this chapter, four meanings intermittently reappear in different documents by different government departments.

Fourthly, major tensions are created by this policy agenda, as it increasingly expects more from deprived neighbourhoods, than it does of affluent neighbourhoods in terms of community involvement (see Willis, 2004, Kleinman, 2000, p56, Kleinman, 1998, p10-11, Taylor, 2002).

Given these paradoxes in the Third Way government's approach to regeneration via participation, there are varying interpretations of its significance. Liddle & Townsend (2003) conclude that: "It is obvious that so far there is no proof that this new model is any more superior than the system that it replaces, though early signs show that it has the potential to do so" (Liddle & Townsend, 2002 p. 53). In contrast, Willis (2004) argues that community involvement has been taken as far as it can go. The following chapters will allow further consideration as to scope and significance of community involvement under the current policy agenda, through detailed studies of Enfield and Haringey.

CHAPTER 5

ESTABLISHING THE STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE OF CENs AND SETTING PRIORITIES FOR VCOs

5. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the ways in which power is deployed and used in the process of incorporating the VCO sector into urban regeneration policy and the way in which VCO power is apparent at different levels/ stages of the policy process. This chapter is presented in three sections in order to explain:

1. How the strategic infrastructure of the CENs has been created and established
2. How agendas and priorities of VCOs are created and established at CEN, Thematic Partnerships and LSP levels
3. How VCOs are delivering policy initiatives

The material for this chapter draws upon a series of participant observations and secondary sources supplied at various events connected with early stage CEN meetings in Enfield and Haringey between October 2004- September 2006 (see Box 5.1). Field notes together with agendas, minutes of meetings and Community Empowerment Network Representatives training course materials represent the data collected. A list of participant observations that took place in the two case study areas can be found in Appendix B. A total of 42 events were attended, accumulating 145 hours of observation over a three- year period (2004-2006).

Box 5.1: Types of Participant Observations

1. Community Empowerment Network Members Meetings
2. Community Empowerment Network Representatives Training and Support Programmes/ courses
3. Community Empowerment Network Consultative Forums (in the case of Haringey)
4. Local Strategic Partnership Meetings (in the case of Haringey)
5. London Community Participation Network (LCPN) Meetings
6. A series of emails with Akronym Consultancy regarding the setting up of the Haringey Empowerment Network (HarCEN).

5.1 Creating and Establishing the Strategic Infrastructure

This section explores how the strategic infrastructure of the CENs was created and established in the two study boroughs. In so doing it will address a series of questions: Has the process of setting up the CENs been democratic and transparent? Did it result in a CEN structure that was broadly based, inclusive and commanded the support of

the VCS? Did it establish a secure foundation for the subsequent evolution of the participation agenda in each borough? How has the working of the infrastructure been experienced in practice in the early stages and what problems or issues seem apparent from the observations of its workings, and from analysing attempts at self-appraisal? Are contrasts apparent between Enfield and Haringey, and how significant might these be in pointing to issues for further investigation?

5.1.1 Establishing a VCO Platform and Bringing VCOs Together

In Enfield, the Community Regeneration Forum preceded the CEN, which was a VCS forum that informed local VCOs about what was going on outside of Enfield and where VCOs could bring in money from, for the purpose of urban regeneration. Subsequently, the idea of establishing CENs came from central government in 2001 and the Community Regeneration Forum provided the foundation for the CEN infrastructure. The ECEN was set up to facilitate VCS involvement in the ESP and its activities. The CEN was funded by GOL through the CEF. This funding was for capacity building, supporting involvement and participation and training for VCOs. The Enfield CEN was set up during 2001 and officially launched in October 2002, making it one of the first Boroughs in London to set up a CEN.

Initially, involvement in the Enfield CEN began with the large umbrella (second tier) VCOs. Much later two outreach workers from two of these second tier VCOs, were introduced to specifically work with the smaller VCOs and "hard to reach" groups in the borough, in order to create awareness about the LSP/ CEN related structures and ultimately get them involved in the CEN process. ECEN is typical of the vast majority of CENs across the UK in that it was established by the local Council for Voluntary Services (CVS); Enfield Voluntary Action (EVA). The CVS became the responsible body (accountable body) to manage ECEN through a consultation process with the VCS. This was because, unlike Haringey, Enfield has a long standing CVS that already had forums established and relationships in place that VCOs felt confident with. The CVS then set about the development of a separate Steering Group comprised of elected ECEN representatives and staffing to oversee the work of the CEN. Consequently, the first year of the CEN in Enfield, 2001, was very much about establishing trust between the statutory and voluntary sectors as well as within the

voluntary sector itself. It was also a period that involved advocating why it was worthwhile for VCOs to get involved (see Box 5.2).

Box 5.2: Advocating for VCO Involvement in CENs

"Many other boroughs have not got CEN's and those that have do not have representation at all levels of the partnership. The ECEN has about 60 representatives. The ECEN and the ESP have turned around the perception that the VCS in Enfield are weak. The ECEN offers a big opportunity for the VCS. This should not be underestimated it should be used. The biggest block of representatives on the ESP is from ECEN. The ECEN is helping make the Community Strategy a living document" **ECEN Representative**

"At 60 the ECEN has more elected/ co-opted third sector representatives than any other CEN in London" **Enfield CVS Representative**

The situation in Haringey was much more complicated reflecting the historical issues of conflict within the community. The CEN for Haringey (HarCEN) was in a unique position, as it was not located under a CVS (see Box 5.3). This was because the organisation that had previously provided the CVS function in Haringey, Voluntary Action Haringey (VAH) had their contract terminated by the London Borough of Haringey (LBH) during early 2000. In fact the LBH cut £60, 000 from VAH, though it is now operating as an independent social enterprise. This led to a period of consultation with the VCOs within Haringey called the SHARE Project. The SHARE Project enabled an interim umbrella body based on the needs and demands of local VCOs and an interim management committee to be established to ensure that the new VCS organisation in Haringey named, HAVCO (Haringey Association of Voluntary and Community Organisations), became fully functional. To an extent the active involvement of the local authority in constructing HAVCO meant it sought to dictate the nature of VCS involvement, in the hope they could work with them. The launch of HAVCO took place in June 2003 and the Haringey CEN (HarCEN) was established later. Consequently, HarCEN was one of the last networks in London to come together.

Box 5.3: HarCEN in a Unique Position "in place or strife"

"We are in a wonderfully unique position - we have already seen what does and doesn't work in other areas. The protocol of HarCEN is about partnership - a professional mindset is required now - rather than adopting the attitude that we are the poor relations. Members need to up their game. It is not sufficient anymore to just continually complain that you are not being given funding. Yes, it's terrible, but you just can't do that anymore - you must be more professional and work for the sector as a whole rather than for individual gain. Members must go to the CEN with a sector view not an organisational view or otherwise HarCEN cannot deliver." **HarCEN Representative**

"HarCEN is co-opted into the Neighbourhood and Renewal agenda - sign HarCEN's protocol so that your voice can be heard. New Labour is driving the community agenda forward - there is now a willingness to engage with communities in Haringey and in London as a whole. Empowerment is powerful. But it is how we use this opportunity to engage the community that is important"

London Borough of Haringey Council Representative

Against this backdrop Government Office for London (GOL) was working to develop a CEN for Haringey, bringing together representatives from the VCOs to act as an advisory group to assist in the CEN's development. At the time GOL could not identify one single organisation with the capacity to develop a CEN and produce an acceptable action plan. Consequently, GOL went out to open tender for consultants to develop the CEN for Haringey. The initial tender process was unsuccessful, so it was taken to a second tender process, which was awarded to Akronym Consultancy, a Liverpool based consultancy firm in March 2003, with the work completed in October of that year. Akronym Consultancy began work with a scoping study to identify local VCOs in the area. A database of some 700 organisations within Haringey or working for local communities in Haringey had already been developed by the SHARE/ HAVCO project, and was held by the LBH. This was supplemented by databases held by the Scarman Trust and the LBH Tenant's Support department (which contained smaller community and resident- based groups).

At the beginning of the project an independent website was established detailing information on Neighbourhood Renewal, LSPs and CENs along with meeting dates and venues. Information meetings then took place on the Neighbourhood Renewal agenda to encourage VCOs to attend conferences where discussions around the development of a CEN in Haringey would take place. These information meetings were initiated primarily to develop a deeper understanding of the role of communities within Neighbourhood Renewal and LSPs, because it became apparent to GOL that there was a limited awareness of the Neighbourhood Renewal vision within the communities and community based organisations of Haringey and what a CEN might contribute to the VCOs. A total of 13 meetings were held across Haringey at a range of different times and venues during May to June 2003 to ensure that as many people as possible could attend. Despite these attempts the meetings were poorly attended with a total of 45 people attending in all.

In July 2003 two conferences were held (one at Chestnut Community Centre- St Ann's where 10 VCO representatives attended and one at the Selby Centre – White Hart Lane where 51 VCOs attended). At these conferences presentations from two separate CENs were given (Preston and Ealing), each with very different structures to illustrate the different options available regarding network structures and "accountable bodies".

Those VCOs that attended these conferences were informed about Preston's CEN being a "company limited by guarantee" with an external accountable body responsible for the Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) finance, whilst in contrast, participants also heard about Ealing, a CEN that was attached to the CVS, which was also their accountable body (identical to that in Enfield). The general consensus from the attending VCOs was that any Haringey CEN should be totally independent, because many VCOs seemed to be of the attitude that "*CENs run by CVS are restrictive and dangerous.*" Consequently, the consultants went about setting up a CEN that would become a "company limited by guarantee" with an external accountable body responsible for the Community Empowerment Fund finance. However, it was expressed by the consultants that clarity was needed on the relationship between HAVCO and the CEN and secondly, HAVCO needed to be acknowledged by the CEN Membership as a resource. There was also some concern expressed by the local authority that the late development of the CEN might impact on the development of the LSP. A number of other issues were also raised at these conferences (see Box 5.4). But the potential VCO participants were beginning to set the agenda and by this stage involvement had been "driven up" to more respectable levels, and could be judged quite inclusive.

Box 5.4: Issues Raised by VCOs at Consultation Events regarding the setting up of Haringey's CEN (2003).

- (1) The process provides an opportunity for VCOs to shape the CEN to meet local needs and to positively engage with all sectors of the community.
- (2) The network should be totally independent.
- (3) The diversity of communities in Haringey is strength and should be built upon.
- (4) There is a need for equality between organisations regardless of their size and resources.
- (5) HAVCO is new and unproven, so who should be the lead body?
- (6) Communication will be the key to developing the CEN.
- (7) Engagement and involvement and how to reach the most "hard to reach" groups must be addressed.
- (8) There needs to be a recognition that the CEN will take time to develop.
- (9) Haringey actually has money available to spend now. Therefore, it was decided at the conferences that a planning group should be established immediately and that this group should be open to all. The group needs to be clear on its roles and responsibilities, people need to pass the message on to others, the group should work quickly to meet GOL's timetable and the outcome of meetings should be broadcast widely.

The last planning group meeting prior to the final conference was held on the 18th September 2003. Here a discussion on the role of the lead body took place and it was agreed to defer the decision concerning which organisation this should be, but to continue with external, independent facilitation of the development of the CEN. It was

not until April 2004 that HarCEN became a "company limited by guarantee," making the CEN and CVS in Haringey functionally independent, which makes the Haringey CEN unlike any others in London. The Haringey planning group decided that they would like the "accountable body" to be an organisation that was outside the voluntary and community infrastructure of Haringey, which was endorsed at the conference. Two organisations were identified (Urban Futures and the Scarman Trust) and the Scarman Trust was secured as the independent accountable body with an established LBH track record (as both HarCEN and HAVCO were new organisations without that track record). It was decided by a ballot of members of HarCEN that the Scarman Trust would be the "accountable body" as an interim arrangement for 18 months. After this period the CEN would take on the role itself, subject to review. It was pointed out that whilst the Scarman Trust was not part of the voluntary sector in Haringey, they had been highly visible in Haringey through their management of the Community Chest and Community Learning Chest. It was also felt that the Scarman Trust was the better choice because it had strong links with VCOs and could be a major asset to the future development of the CEN.

A weakness in Haringey was that the process and outcome of the setting up of the Haringey CEN created areas of potential conflict between three organisations (1) HAVCO an organisation recognised by the LBH who supports new VCOs; (2) VAH that operates as another organisation that levers in funding after being discredited by the LBH. (VAH was recognised by voluntary sector players, but it was unclear whom they represented). (3) HarCEN, designed to be a network of VCOs that assisted with policy in Haringey. Consequently, communication has been problematic amongst these three factions of the VCS in Haringey. This is despite the effort to adopt a rational and inclusive approach to setting up the CEN in Haringey using expert consultants and a participatory approach.

5.1.2 Membership and Elections

In both Enfield and Haringey full CEN membership was available to groups that were based in the respective boroughs or had 80% of their user groups in the borough and agreed to sign up to the values, aims and objectives of the CEN. Community groups, faith groups, networks, residents and tenants groups and voluntary groups that had a

simple set of rules or a constitution that governs them as an organisation were eligible to join the CEN. Full membership gave groups full voting rights within the CEN (one vote per organisation), while associate membership was available to local residents and organisations with less than 80% of their user groups in the respective boroughs, giving them the right to attend and speak at meetings, receive all information from the CEN, but not to have a vote in the CEN elections. The electoral system for VCO representatives in both case study areas was designed and conducted by the Electoral Reform Service (ERS), so as to be impartial and fair. It was also intended that an impartial electoral system would prevent the “traditional gatekeepers” or “usual suspects” from holding all the power. The principles of the system are documented in Box 5.5. All representatives were elected on the basis of manifestos, but in order to become a nominee they had to attend capacity building training and representation skill training, which was funded by GOL. CEN representatives were to this extent democratically elected and supported.

Box 5.5: The Election Process for CEN Representatives

- (1) Postal ballot – facilitated by external facilitator to ensure transparency.
- (2) Only groups in membership of the CEN at the time of the ballot will be able to vote.
- (3) Job description and personal specification for candidates to ensure that they are fully aware of the skills required.
- (4) Capacity building sessions before election for candidates so as to understand issues of representation and accountability.
- (5) Code of conduct and terms of reference for all representatives
- (6) No sitting Councillors or council employees as representatives of the CEN
- (7) No single person is allowed to hold more than one office and the length of office term is still to be defined.
- (8) Declaration of interest of members
- (9) Standard checks on all nominated organisations/ representatives
- (10) It was raised whether organisations based outside Haringey, but who work for people of the borough can be members of CEN and CEN representatives?

The turnover of representatives had been minimal (only four have left) between 2004-2006, none of which gave “not coping” in their role as a reason. However, that is not to say it was not happening, as CEN representatives attendance to partnership meetings were low in some cases (with them having only attended a couple of meetings). Representatives were elected for a period of no more than 2 years, plus 6 months to mentor the new representative. However, in Enfield during November 2004, it was agreed by Members to extend/ defer the current representatives term of office by a year. This was in order to allow the current representatives to take part in a “support programme,” which specifically intended to assess the training and support needs of

representatives and to examine the inputs and outputs. The "support programme" commenced in November 2004 and ended in October 2005.

5.1. 3 Self- Appraisal

At an early stage ECEN took steps in self- appraisal. The support programme conducted by an external consultant in 2004, included a review in the form of a survey of all the CEN representatives, intended to determine the needs and capabilities of the representatives to perform in their ECEN role. The findings of the support programme can be found in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: CEN Representative Support Programme Findings

Support Programme Findings	Percentage (%)
Meeting Attendance	
Representatives attending Thematic Partnership/ board meetings regularly	90%
Representatives regularly attending ECEN meetings	60%
Representatives attending representative support meetings	50%
Influencing Decisions	
Representatives felt that they were able to influence decisions made at meetings	50%
Representatives unable to link decision- making made at meetings with the priorities set out in the Community Strategy.	60%
Meeting Preparation	
Representatives that prepared for partnership/board meetings	80%
Representatives that did not prepare for ECEN meetings	65%
Representatives that did not prepare for representatives' support meetings	69%
Feedback	
Representatives producing feedback reports	63%
Representatives that feed back on their work at meetings	66%
Representatives that did not believe their reports were effective or simply did not produce them	78%
Representatives that did not provide verbal feedback at meetings they attended	50%
Communication	
Representatives that knew one or more representatives on their partnership/board.	82%
Representatives that did not discuss issues with other representatives before meetings	45%
Representatives that had some kind of communication with other representatives after meetings	72%
Representatives that let other representatives know that they would not be attending meetings	58%
Representatives that were already or would like to work more closely with other representatives	69%
Representatives that had accessed training	75%
Role of CEN Representative	
Representatives who had applied for subsistence that found the process difficult	60%
Representatives that did not feel that they received any information to help them specifically with their role	81%
Representatives that felt that the CEN listened to the issues that they raised	57%

Some significant results from the support programme include that only 50% of representatives attended representative support meetings, yet only 50% of

representatives felt that they were able to influence decisions made at meetings. Some feeling decisions were made outside the Boards and that they only came to the Board for ratification. Over 45% of representatives did not discuss issues with other representatives before meetings, sometimes leading to representatives contradicting or repeating each other. This is indicative of the varying capacities of ECEN representatives, which is explored in greater detail in Chapter 7. 75% of representatives had accessed training from ECEN, but this tended to be “effective representation” training rather than other courses. This was taken to the Steering Group to consider making it a requirement for representatives to attend training. However, an ECEN representative stated: “This is difficult to police. Sometimes representatives cannot come on the training days, so attempts are made to accommodate them later. Also sometimes representatives say they will attend and fail to arrive. Work as an ECEN representative is very time consuming and there is a danger that becoming too prescriptive could discourage representatives.” 81% did not feel that they received any information to help them specifically with their role and 57% of the representatives felt that the CEN listened to the issues that they raised. This suggests that communication amongst VCO representatives is problematic.

From these findings it was recommended by the consultant that ECEN organise pre-election events to ascertain the level of support required by potential representatives and that clear guidelines on the level of commitment required for representatives was part of the election process and that all representatives should undertake an induction process before starting their role. Protocols for working with other representatives on partnership/ boards should be developed as well as mentoring support systems for new representatives being paired with experienced representatives. As well as development of a programme that provides representatives with opportunities for both formal and informal engagement with other representatives and short and concise training opportunities. It was suggested that ECEN must also start the process of developing facilitated days away for each partnership/ board on an annual basis. Where partnerships had limited attendance by representatives, pre-meetings should be organised and representatives encouraged to attend. It was also recommended that ECEN must work with representatives to develop with them at least one method of feedback that works for them and their interest group, make ESP minutes available to all representatives, encourage greater use of the website as a means of gaining

knowledge and filing information and consider providing additional administrative support to representatives. It was also raised by an ECEN Representative that: "There is a need to address the issue that representatives introduce themselves as representing their own organisation, when they should state they are representing the ECEN. It is also necessary to address how representatives feed information from the bottom-up, rather than from the top- down."

The evidence from this self- appraisal exercise suggests that in Enfield at least, the issue of CEN representativeness and the competence of the CEN representatives were addressed at an early stage, and steps were taken to improve working practices, whilst in Haringey no such attempts had been made.

5.1.4 Training and Capacity Building among VCO Representatives

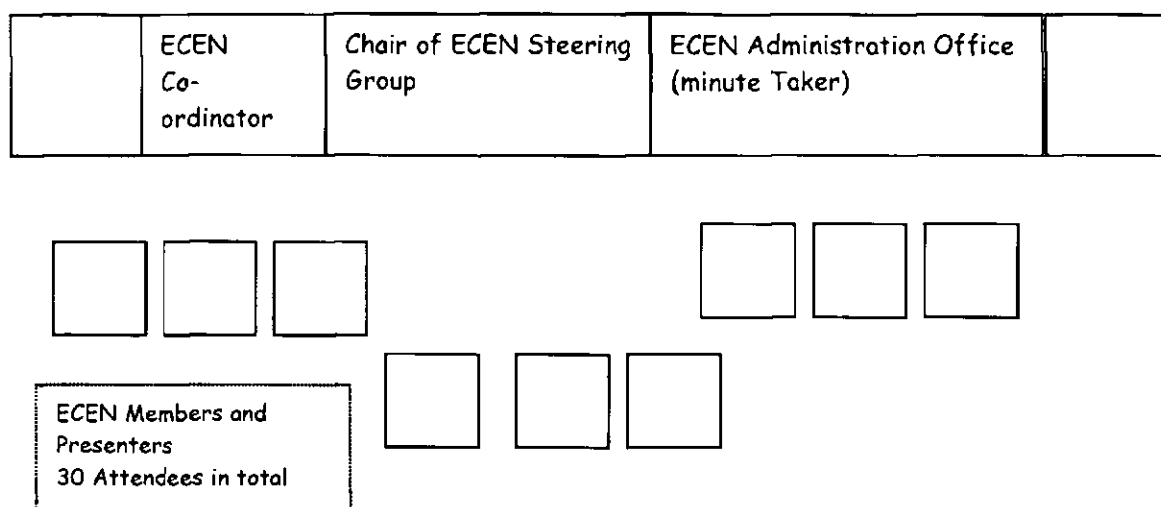
Training development and support activities such as "effective representation" courses - to cover issues of representation, accountability, regeneration, negotiation and consultation, to ensure representatives were fully aware of all the issues of representation and that they were accountable to the CEN, were delivered quarterly, in both Enfield and Haringey. The "effective representation" training got participants to think about who they represented and within which structures, how they came about their role, how they reported back to those they represented, and whether they had terms of reference for their role. In this activity in Haringey the group was praised for their distinctions between who and where they represented. Who they represented was presented in a realistically confined and restricted way. Usually when this exercise was carried out people claim to represent a much larger group than most of the time they have limited contact with. This exaggeration of constituency undermines the sector and causes the council to question all VCOs, such that they begin to ask questions about how many members an organisation has, and whether they can purport to represent whom they claim to. HarCEN Member organisations (or their current representatives) seem to have avoided this fault, though the exercise also revealed CEN Members did not have a mandate of whom they represented and whom they were accountable to, or at least they were not aware of it.

Another group activity on the “effective representation” training included the “voluntary sector game” which comprised of a set of cards with acronyms in regeneration, and participants had to place each card under one of four categories: primary service delivery organisation, second tier/ infrastructure organisation, statutory organisation and independent/ private sector organisation. Groups were given just 15 minutes to place 17 cards in these categories. The exercise was used to demonstrate that partnership boards take a lot of information quickly and in multi- agency working different time scales are used than is usual within the voluntary sector. It also illustrated some cross over between the three sectors of the economy and the way in which key roles and definitions interlink. VCO groups took longer than 15 minutes to complete the exercise, indicating the problems they face in keeping up with the statutory sector in partnership meetings. It was already clear at this “observational” stage of the research that VCO competence in their role of CEN representative would be a factor influencing their effective participation.

5.1.5 Structure Implementation

(a) CENs

The CENs are the vehicle for linking the VCS with LSPs, with the intention of bringing together a range of organisations from large professional voluntary agencies to the smallest community organisations, faith organisations or residents groups, primarily to provide representatives who represent the sector on the Thematic Action Groups and LSP. They are responsible for getting information about the LSPs out to all sections of the community and for providing ways in which people affected by poor service delivery can get more involved in discussing and planning how the services should be changed, and also help set priorities. They are also responsible for the distribution of small amounts of money for specified purposes. Decisions on the plans for development of the CENs were made by the ECEN Steering Group in Enfield’s case and the HarCEN Board in Haringey’s case, in consultation with the CEN Membership. The CENs had two levels: (i) the ECEN Steering Group/ HarCEN Executive Board, which comprised of VCO representatives and met a minimum of 6 times a year. (ii) The CEN Members Meetings, which comprised of CEN Members and Associate Members and met monthly. ECEN Members meetings were conducted using a “top table” approach (see Figure 5.1), whilst HarCEN adopted a “round table” discussion format.

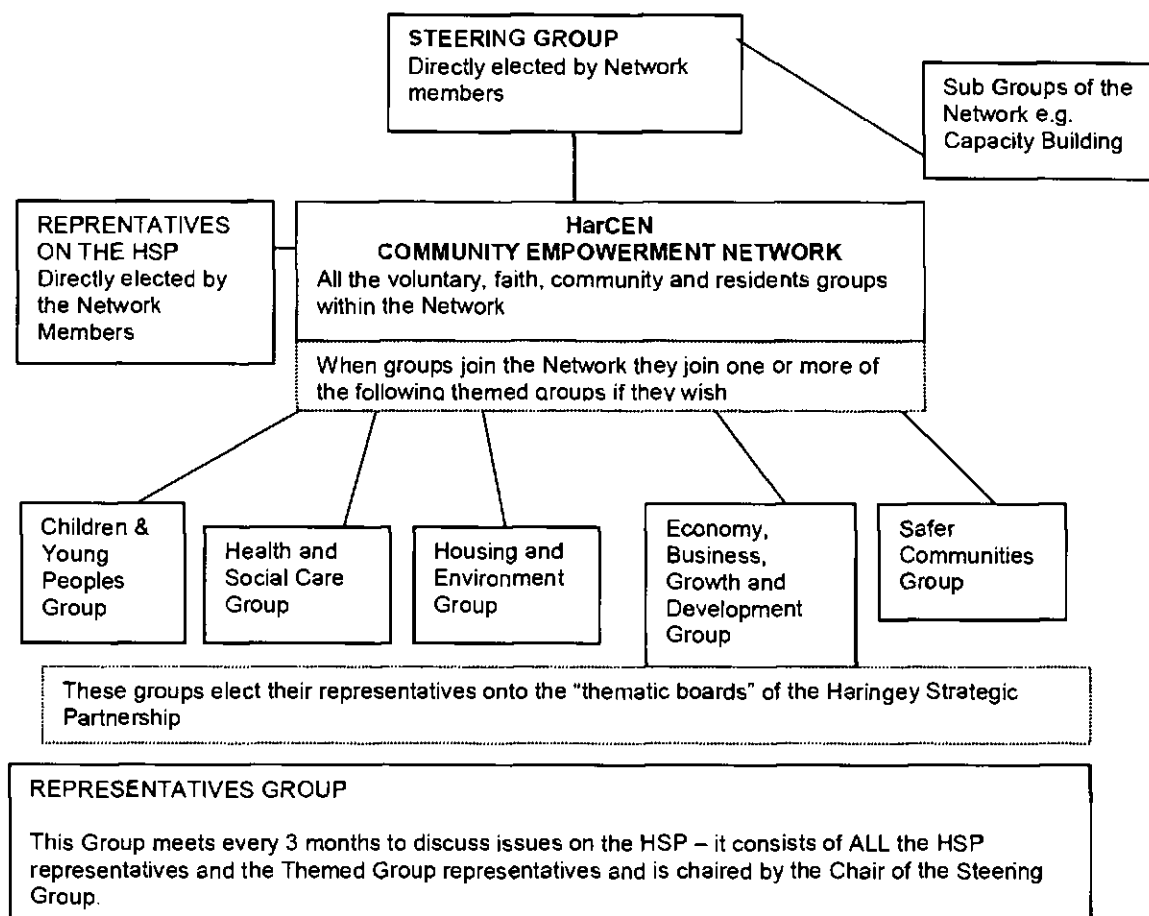
Figure 5.1: Floor plan of ECEN Members Meetings

Members of HarCEN were expected to join the participation process either through the Consultative forums and/ or Theme Groups or directly through HarCEN, and indicate the forums/ thematic group to which they would like to subscribe, allowing them to see the relevance of the CEN to the bigger picture. HarCEN had an over-arching structure, split into "theme" groups. Various "consultative forums," some of which were set up and commissioned during March/ April 2004, facilitated these "theme groups." These included (1) leisure and culture, (2) women's issues (Women's Forum), (3) carers' issues (Carers Forum), (4) refugee and asylum seekers forum (Haringey Refugee and Asylum Group) (5) black and minority ethnic issues (BME Forum set up October 2004), (6) gay and lesbian bisexual and tran-sexual issues (GLBT Forum) and (7) interfaith issues (Faith Forum – set up November 2004).

The intention was that HarCEN Members participate via these forums and/ or via the thematic groups that match the "key thematic partnerships" of the Haringey Strategic Partnership as its main issues (see Figure 5.2). HarCEN Thematic Groups intended to match the HSP structures were set up and commissioned during March/ April 2004 and included the following: (1) "health and social care/ well-being" (run by HAVCO); (2) "economy, business, growth and development" (run in house by HarCEN); (3) "children and young people" (run by a play organisation); (4) "liveability, environment and housing" (run in house by HarCEN) and (5) "community safety" (run by a faith organisation). HarCEN is different from many other CENs in that in addition to local

community themes it also reflected the key themes identified by the HSP. By using the same theme group names HarCEN intended to signal it was “buying into” the council’s language, thus furthering the impression of partnership. However, this method created problems with communication because naming the sub groups of HarCEN as “thematic groups” caused confusion with the “thematic groups” of the HSP.

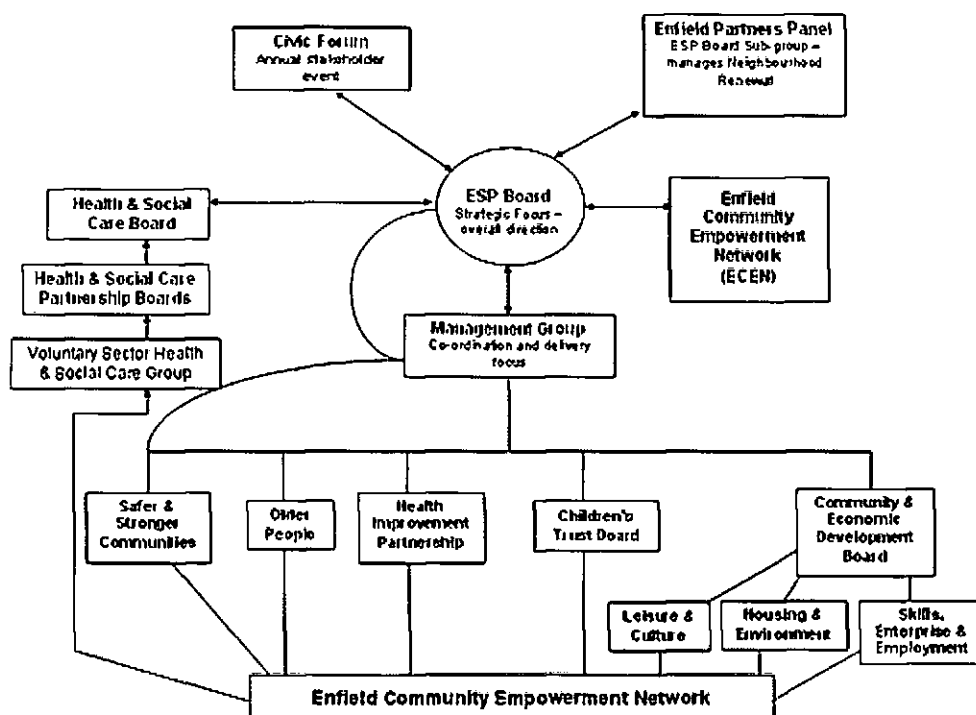
Figure 5.2: Initial Structure of HarCEN



Some of these forums (e.g. the faith, BME, Women’s, Carers’, GLBT, HRAG) were run by sub contractors, and some were managed in-house by HarCEN. It was clear from participants however, that there needed to be more regular face to face contact from the HarCEN team and the sub contractors who facilitated some of the forums needed to follow through on their commissioning mandate to “sell” the CEN to the members of the Forums/ Thematic Groups as some participants still did not know about CENs. Although, the voluntary sector was mirroring the statutory sector structures further work was needed to work within the boundaries and join- up where necessary. The

participation infrastructure that had been set up, “below” the CEN itself was somewhat complex and risked confusing VCO respondents, within Haringey. In contrast, members of ECEN were expected to join the participation process directly through ECEN, making it much simpler for the VCOs to understand.

Figure 5.3: Enfield Strategic Partnership Structure



(b) Thematic Groups

The Thematic Action Groups are the element of the participation infrastructure that act as themed partnerships, focussing on specific areas (such as health, crime & disorder, leisure & culture, employment, education & enterprise, housing & environment and children & young people), they influence the Local Strategic Partnership, whose members represent the statutory, private and voluntary/ community sectors. Representatives seek the views of the membership and feed these back to the Thematic Partnerships that they were nominated and elected to sit on (as CEN representatives) by the CEN Membership, via the Electoral Reform Service (ERS) process. This feedback is achieved through Members Meetings, themed/ consultative forums, websites and feedback reports (in Enfield). This structure attempts to facilitate

a process where the VCS directly influences decisions made at the strategic level (i.e. the LSP). The Thematic Action Groups are thus a key level of influence, especially in Enfield (see Figure 5.3). It is at this level where influence might be best exerted when considering the level of policy priorities and content, and so the experience of the VCO representatives at this level is explored in the subsequent section (i.e. Section 5.2.2) of this chapter and subsequent chapters (i.e. 6 and 7).

(c) LSP

Local Strategic Partnerships are partnerships set up to involve local people and agencies in setting out a vision for local neighbourhood renewal and helping to improve the delivery of local services through better planning, and ensuring that services aimed at the most disadvantaged communities/ wards are effectively delivered. As part of their role they oversee the development and implementation of the Community Strategy for the Borough. LSPs are made up of representatives from the public sector (PCT, Social Services, and Police), private sector (local businesses) and the VCS. These representatives/ key decision makers' work together to make decisions about what services will be available in the Borough. The LSP Board meets four times a year. There are three representatives from the CEN and three representatives from the CVS Board that sit on the Haringey LSP, which were co-opted until elections for LSP representatives took place (but are currently still there). In Enfield the ESP Board has six VCO representatives (one of which is the accountable body). Similarly, the LSP National Evaluation (2005) has shown that there is wide variation across LSPs in the UK about the level and patterns of representation on LSPs.

The structure of VCO representation in the LSP and its links with the CENs was put forward for consideration by the "interim steering groups" (which in Haringey's case was established by Akronym in September 2003 and by EVA in Enfield during 2001). Attendees at the conferences put forward names to take the CEN forward until the election of the Steering Group and members were in place. Akronym brokered the "interim LSP representatives" in Haringey in June 2003 and by EVA in Enfield in 2001. The structure of the CEN in Haringey was designed to ensure accountability to the Network from all representatives, and for community groups to be able to exert their influence at all levels. A number of comments were referred back to the "interim steering group" in Haringey concerning the CEN structure (see Box 5.6).

Box 5.6: Comments from Haringey VCOs

- Accountability
- Inclusivity
- Keeping the door open, for the CEN to set its own agenda
- Identification of groups that are not represented such as young people, marginalised groups, interest groups and HAVCO
- There are gaps around certain issues such as faith groups and young people. How to include Social enterprises
- The need of a flow diagram, which identifies grass-root issues going through the CEN process
- The need for VCOs to be in the “loop” and understanding the flow of information
- The need to build on the value/ cultural base via mentoring (e.g. HarCEN is an “evolving” CEN rather than “constructed” or complete).

5.1.6 Reservations

The observation process and analysis of supporting documents revealed some reservations about the scope and effectiveness of the participation infrastructure established in each borough and some contrasts between them. These included issues around representation, duplication of organisations in Haringey, agenda setting/ influencing, the ability of VCO representatives to understand and exploit the opportunity to participate (in both boroughs). These are discussed below:

(a) Representation

A number of training sessions for VCO CEN representatives attended by the researcher gave useful evidence and insight on representativeness and the abilities and understanding of VCS representatives. In Haringey, it was revealed that there was always one sector of the community that did not have a forum in the infrastructure as set up. In most cases it was found that the generic approach created less conflict amongst groups, and major groups were represented, but some questions remained as to whether all were represented. For example, in HarCEN or the HSP there was no disability theme group. Haringey Carers and Disability Consortium, the Phoenix Group, Markfield and the Winkfield Resource Centre were the only disability umbrella groups in Haringey. There were no disability organisations in Haringey specifically. There were only local groups of national organisations e.g. Diabetes UK, SCOPE etc. Consequently, disability groups in Haringey were not represented effectively in the CEN structures.

In contrast, in Enfield, the major difficulty in representation has been around BME representation. Prior to the elections in Enfield there was a "steering group" of third sector representatives, which included all the umbrella organisations (including several BME umbrella groups). However, when the elections took place not all of the umbrella representatives got elected, most noticeably that of the Racial Equality Council. Consequently, for some time there was a situation where BME communities were not represented (see Box 5.7).

Box 5.7: Representational Issues

*"The problem is that if it is done through co- options it is unsatisfactory, what should have happened and in hindsight it is easy to say this, is someone should have been doing some leg- work with the BME community to have ensured effective representation, as it now falls on elected representatives to represent those interests and they may or may not be sufficiently skilled/ equipped to do that. Another explanation is that ECEN may not have had enough of those organisations registered."*⁸

Enfield Local Authority Officer

*"I think BME organisations do and have nominees, they may not have been built up to the appropriate level, but what was there did not get elected. I think it is primarily because they did not go out and do the work – campaigning to get small groups to vote."*⁹

Enfield Local Authority Officer

It also came to light that not every VCO understood the elections process and in fact BME representatives were put forward for election, but then they did not vote. Therefore, a BME representative was not elected through the ERS. So a post was advertised and an individual was appointed. On the "health and social care" partnership there is a BME sub group. ECEN are currently acting in an advisory capacity to widen the BME sub group to not just health issues. The Racial Equality Council has since been commissioned by ECEN to organise and run workshops, which look at representation from BME communities.

(b) Issues of Overlapping Roles for HarCEN and HAVCO: The London Community Participation Network (LCPN)

Haringey was selected as the first CEN site visit for the London Community Participation Network (LCPN) in November 2004. This body is concerned with influencing the skills of representatives and specifically the financial monitoring of the grant that has been given to London based CENs. Here it was expressed that a key part of the CEN's development from the point of view of GOL and the LBH was to

⁸ Interviewee comments from scooping study research

⁹ Interviewee comments from scooping study research

ensure there was no duplication of effort and resources in terms of engaging the local community and ensure that the sector sees a clear demarcation of its role and the role of the CVS and other second tier VCOs in Haringey. Officers of LBH were concerned about the need for the CEN and HAVCO to work in partnership to avoid duplication of resources, as there had already been a considerable amount of resources put into the development of HAVCO from both the LBH and the HSP (see Box 5.8). GOL officers were not alone in this view with some evident confusion among HAVCO Board Members, as they had seen their organisation go through a similar process to that of the CEN to develop a CVS. Some Board members saw this process as a duplication of effort, whilst others recognised it as a necessary process to achieve a different end product – the CEN. In distinguishing between the roles of HarCEN and HAVCO, a HarCEN Board Member used a “net and umbrella” analogy at a Member’s meeting (see Box 5.9). It is perhaps significant that this issue of possible confusion of roles of HarCEN and HAVCO was highlighted early in the life of HarCEN and observed as a concern both by the LCPN and by this researcher at the LCPN visit. This returns as a theme affecting trust in the workings of HarCEN by VCO representatives later in the research.

Box 5.8: GOL Officers Concerns

“What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to a CVS run CEN and an independent CEN? One of the potential threats I see in Haringey is that the framework between HAVCO and HarCEN needs to be agreed because at the moment it is merely replication. ECEN has a very strong management structure due to key staff at EVA. Barnet’s voluntary sector is working well with the LSP they are doing it their own way, raising the question as to whether the NR approach is in fact the right and most effective way of involving the VCOs in regeneration. Waltham Forest has had a different set of problems also.”
GOL Officer

Box 5.9: The “Net and Umbrella” analogy: CEN & HAVCO

“People are currently pitting the CEN against the CVS – the CEN is a net to shield and protect the capacity of the voluntary sector. The HAVCO – VAH scenario has resulted in the voluntary sector being weak in Haringey – there is no strong voice and central to these representational issues is the need for a track record, which Haringey does not have. The sector needs to mature as organisations.

HarCEN Board Member

HarCEN is for grass-root organisations. It is the Net, so that the smaller, hard to reach and the hidden voluntary and community organisations don't slip through the Net. It is to capacity build smaller voluntary and community organisations, so that they are fit to supply and can get the track record they need. The Net is catching the fish and bringing them to the Umbrella.

HAVCO is the Umbrella, so that voluntary and community organisations don't get wet, instead its job is to capacity build larger voluntary and community organisations, so that they are able to contribute to the community”

HarCEN Board Member

You cannot catch a fish with an Umbrella or keep off the rain with a Net. It is advisable for voluntary and community organisations to join both HarCEN and HAVCO, it just depends what is important to individual voluntary and community organisations.”

HarCEN Board Member

“We have been battling through a storm. It has been a war to set up HarCEN. We have engaged with statutory bodies that didn't want to be involved with us by delivery. We need to reach out to those voices that are not being heard. HarCEN is your critical friend. The HSP is inviting HarCEN to be involved, because we can reach where others cannot reach. We do not have to bang on the door to be invited anymore. It is good that people are starting to talk about us, it means the dialogue has started.”

HarCEN Board Member

Another concern expressed by GOL related to that of the capacity of HarCEN to manage the finance because being a “company limited by guarantee,” they had to do everything themselves whereas an established CVS already had a financial base. It would seem that the Haringey Community Empowerment Network was established via a rational and (eventually) an inclusive process, with its outcome meant to be a “model” CEN. But in the process it ignored conflicts and revealed some key issues concerning clarity of roles.

5.2 Setting Agendas and Making Priorities: Is the infrastructure working?

This section focuses, on the “workings” of the CEN/ LSP related structures and how agendas and priorities of the community were set up and how much influence VCOs had in this process. This is explored through the observations of Public Management Framework Exercises set by GOL at the CEN level and through observations of the differences on the VCO and statutory sector relationship at the Thematic Partnership and LSP levels.

5.2.1 At the CEN Level: PMF Exercises imposed by GOL

According to GOL: "At the heart of the government's strategy for neighbourhood renewal is the principle that local people know best what the priorities and needs of their own neighbourhood are and that they must have the opportunity and the tools to get involved in local decision making and service delivery." Consequently, CENs were required by GOL to carry out Public Management Framework (PMF) exercises (in line with criteria set out by GOL), so as to report on Members views and ensure continuation of GOL funding. I observed this in both Enfield and Haringey during 2005. However, their approaches to this GOL requirement differed considerably.

In Enfield during 2004, (the previous year to my observation) a special meeting was held for the PMF exercise, but no VCOs attended, so in 2005 it was dealt with at the normal ECEN members meeting in the usual top table formal fashion. In fact Enfield's Performance Management Feedback in 2004 from GOL, in terms of assessment did receive "amber green status", with a GOL Officer and ECEN Accountable body, commenting (see Box 5.10)

Box 5.10: Public Management Framework Exercise in Enfield

"The ESP has moved from an under performing LSP in 2003 to one of the better LSPs nationally."
GOL Officer

"Members must respond to documents to influence the process. ECEN has to complete Performance Management Review in March 2005. If you want the resources to continue you must be involved in the process."
Accountable Body

"We do have influence through GOL; they do not get overly involved about us not getting invited to certain meetings, but are keen to use evaluation tools to see if we feel we are being listened to by the statutory sectors. In fact, LBE are actually concerned we say the right things to GOL."
ECEN Worker

Consequently, in 2005 the PMF exercise took place at the ECEN Members meeting held on 1st March 2005 and was facilitated by a freelance consultant who supported ECEN through the performance review process. The consultant stated that: "I have met with the ESP and the ECEN steering group and have sent out a questionnaire to all ECEN's key partners. Talking to ECEN Members is the last stage in the process." The Accountable Body put together an action plan for ECEN and set out how much money would be spent. The consultant took participants through the PMF document, which asked a series of questions about ECEN's performance. The questions covered: (1) communication and information; (2) organisational capacity and learning; (3) inclusivity; (4) representation and accountability; (5) the LSP context; (6) influence and impacts

and (7) action for improvements. Members were asked to give the ECEN a rating from 0-5 for each question. Overall members gave the ECEN a good rating and said it was performing well.

In Haringey, the PMF exercise included a questionnaire and focus group posting activity for member organisations, which I was also able to observe. The questionnaire was completed on site at HarCEN Members Meeting on 16th March 2005. This was an especially useful activity to observe since it gave insight into a key issue – How VCO members saw “HarCEN in action” and their diagnosis of its strengths and weaknesses at that time. The focus group posting activity was first completed by the original steering group in January 2005 and was repeated in March because such good feedback was given by using this method of engagement, which was chosen and designed by HarCEN. These activities formed part of HarCEN’s performance management assessment to allow HarCEN to take stock and assess how well it had been doing in meeting objectives, identifying any weaknesses and agreeing on actions for improvement (e.g. to identify how members would like to see things next year) Participants were asked to respond to questions under six main themes (1) communication and information; (2) organisational capacity and learning; (3) inclusivity; (4) representation and accountability; (5) the LSP context; and (6) HarCEN’s influence and impacts. Under each sub question for these categories members were asked for (a) their existing knowledge and (b) what they would like to see in the future. Appendix D documents the key issues that the VCOs posted on the wall during the focus group activities.

The existence of these evaluation exercises required and imposed by GOL, shows that the CEN infrastructure set up in each borough, was from the start subject to critical self-examination, designed to identify issues of inclusiveness operations, effectiveness and VCO impact. As we still see this tradition continued in subsequent years and seems to be helpful in allowing VCOs to learn from the initial workings of the participation system, especially in Enfield and to a degree influenced its evolution. What these initial assessments identified was mainly a positive response, but with reservations that in subsequent more detailed research I was able to clarify and expand. For example, in Haringey member VCOs interpreted the conduct/ structure of HarCEN as mainly positive with regards to organisational capacity and learning of the VCOs. The CEN’s

existence and its activities were attempting to reach out to groups that had not been included or felt involved in local activities before, and as such participants saw the CEN as critical to the development, representation and growth of marginalised groups in Haringey. However, it was felt by participants that clarity was needed regarding communication in terms of getting information out to VCOs and other partners regarding what the VCS can bring to the partnership, as well as how VCO representatives “feed back” to their constituents the outcomes of decisions. This exercise also indicated BME focussed VCOs needed greater support to “actively” participate, with no outreach strategy to ensure inclusivity of such groups in place. There was a recognition from participants that VCO Representatives were at the table for the first time, but it was clear from this exercise that they did not always feel that they were involved in the decision making process, as over the last year many decisions had already been made before HarCEN was in operation.

Whilst these PMF exercises were taking place, GOL (2005) meanwhile defined four key areas for all CEN's to work under stating:

“The Single Community Programme aims to develop effective participation which is rooted in engagement at neighbourhood level, resourced and supported by a strategic infrastructure to achieve: (1) Engagement (also described as Social Capital); (2) Learning (also described as Governance); (3) Neighbourhood Level Working (also part of Service Delivery) and (4) Small Grants Programme (also seen as part of Social Inclusion and Cohesion).”

HarCEN's Management Committee, (i.e. the Board), which comprised nine individuals then took the comments made by HarCEN Members from the PMF exercise (see Appendix D) and put those that related to GOL's four priorities on HarCEN'S Action Plan for April 2005- March 2006. The HarCEN Board were then told by GOL to consult with HarCEN Members about the proposed Action Plan that they had devised, and subsequently, HarCEN Members were consulted on the Action Plan at the Members Meeting held on 25th May 2005. However, the Action Plan was being signed off by GOL on 26th May 2005 (the day after the Members Meeting), which raised issues around how/ when the comments from the Members Meeting were supposed to be fed into the Action Plan. A certain amount of trust was lost “around the table” at HarCEN because of this tight deadline, which seemed to render the consultation over the Action Plan redundant (see Box 5.11). In fact, VCO “trust” in HarCEN is revealed as an important factor influencing the effectiveness of HarCEN and later in the study, this is an

important marker. Once the Action Plan was signed off by GOL the CEF money went to the Scarman Trust, as the accountable body and then HarCEN received the finance for commissioning programmes for 2005/06. It was reported at a subsequent Members Meeting on 20th July 2005 that GOL were intending to use HarCEN's 37 paged Action Plan as an example of Best Practice for CENs in London.

Box 5.11: PMF Exercise in Haringey

"Our funding agreement paperwork has to be signed off and justified. The Scarman Trust is commissioned to carry out Community Chest on HarCEN's behalf because we are so new. We are moving as fast as the bureaucracy will allow us. We are naive because we are so young and want to do things faster than we can."

HarCEN Board Member

5.2.2 At the Thematic Partnership Level

The issue of who chairs the thematic partnerships emerged as a key bone of contention in Enfield soon after the CEN was set up. During 2003 it was brought to the attention of the ECEN by its representatives on the ESP Thematic Partnerships that their experience and knowledge of the area was not being taken on board/ being used to assist in the allocation of NRF for individual projects. ECEN representatives also wanted to know what evidence these decisions were being based upon. The allocation of NRF projects was in fact being based on a MORI survey carried out in the year 2000. The ECEN representatives felt a more in-depth and updated consultation should be used to allocate funds, which took their views into consideration. The Chairs of the Thematic Partnerships (e.g. representatives from the statutory sector) stated that they did not have enough time for all this paperwork etc, as it was additional to their workloads. As a result of this, ECEN held a "consultation event" on commissioning" in March 2004. This was a useful event to observe, as it showed how ECEN was trying to use its influence to effect agenda setting at the Thematic Partnership level.

This event focused on the "neighbourhood renewal commissioning" process in Enfield, which looked at the 5 neighbourhood renewal commissioning priorities, the research evidence to support these priorities, the delivery of the projects and cross cutting issues. 20 representatives from across all sectors in the borough attended this event and an independent consultant produced a report. The event and subsequent recommendations contributed to an improvement in the way decisions were made at ESP meetings. This event assisted in creating a better relationship between the VCS

and statutory bodies, as it allowed the difficulties each sector faces to be acknowledged by both sectors and the statutory bodies also accepted that the knowledge of the VCS was a valuable resource. The ECEN has subsequently organised VIP lunches for all sectors involved in the ESP for networking purposes. This has helped the voluntary sector to understand the local agenda in Enfield, and how they can make a change. For the statutory sector it gave them an opportunity to come and explain themselves, which seemed to imply attention is being paid to informal networking as well as formal structures (see Box 5.12)

Box 5.12: Differences in the VCO and statutory sector relationship

"It is not an equal playing field for us – The statutory sectors have more influence. The fact that all the Chairs of the Themed Partnerships are from the statutory sector says a great deal about power and where it lies. The Terms of Reference were amended quite recently to allow Vice Chairs to be from the voluntary sector. However, there are no plans to have a 2-3 year turnover period of Chairs via an election process – this would in theory allow voluntary sector representatives to at some point in time be able to Chair meetings. Consequently, the power very much sits with them. ECEN representatives that attend the Thematic Partnership meetings actually complain that the Chairs are not very effective. ECEN representatives want to feel that they have the opportunity to add to the agenda and do not feel that it is a closed shop deal."

ECEN Representative

"It is happening bottom-up, but we are not getting it from the top-down. They are going away making decisions like an old boy's network – problem lies with how to engage the VCS. Statutory sector representatives will not admit this because they see it as being disloyal to their colleagues. Statutory sector representatives join ranks – we do not do that, but they know what is happening in their hearts."

ECEN Representative

"Council Officers at Enfield are bricking it because the ECEN representatives understand the policies etc. more than they do. In one instance a Council Officer was unaware of a government policy that had been in place for 4 years."

Research Consultant

"Through the work of the ECEN the statutory sector has had to look deeper than just a document lying on their desk from 4 years ago (MORI survey). It is bringing the statutory sectors and the voluntary sector together more and breaking down some of the barriers that exist. There is definitely a recognition of the different ways sectors and organisations operate and a greater level of respect for each other."

ECEN Representative

Another example, showing a change in the VCO and statutory sector relationship subsequent upon the VCS being given a more secure and formal role in local policy making, is that of the "local compact." The "local compact" in Enfield has been in operation since 2002. There is a VCS steering group for the compact (Compact Review Board). Yet it would appear that the value of the VCS contribution in the borough via "the compact" was not appreciated nor understood by the statutory sector initially. Some statutory bodies were also ignoring a requirement of the "local compact," the 12-week consultation period and were attempting to push through decisions, without this consultation process having taken place. There was also concern about the ownership of "the compact" as not everyone was signed up to it, diagnostic of statutory bodies not

rising to the commitment, and revealing the need for training on both sides (see Box 5.13).

It was announced at the ECEN Members Meeting in March 2005 that the Enfield Compact Review Board Meetings were to be suspended until the statutory sector agreed to engage with “the compact” more systematically and statutory partners had identified their representatives, as only voluntary sector representatives had been present at the previous two meetings. This experience suggests Council Officers were thrust into an environment where they did not possess the skills, or have an understanding of the new circumstances, which obliged them to consult with the VCS, as well as a resistance to change.

Box 5.13: The Local Compact and its credibility

“Do Council members understand the need for them to work in partnership with the voluntary and community sector? The LBE’s website suggests that the voluntary and community sector’s budget will be cut, which was not a good example of partnership working. I feel the strategic part of the relationship with the sector is not fully understood, many councillors only recognised that the council provided funds.”

ECEN Representative

“I am not sure whether the Compact had made a difference to the voluntary sector – what has the impact of the Compact been?”

ECEN Representative

“The Compact advocates partnership, but there are no attendees from the local authority or health”

ECEN Representative

“It is not the failure of the Compact, but the inability of councillors to pay any credence to it.”

ECEN Representative

“The voluntary sector is better trained on negotiations than they are (statutory sector)”

ECEN Representative

“The statutory sectors always want to push things through. There is a need to consult with members, give them time to do so and listen to them or what is the point of putting money into CENs.”

ECEN Representative

Consequently, “building bridges training” for council officers on the validity of partnerships, perceptions of the VCS and how they should work together took place. ECEN, whose actions highlighted the initially poor level of participation among council officers for the new regime of VCO participation, felt that “the compact” training should be made part of all new council staff training and existing staff should be encouraged to be trained in understanding “the compact.” They felt so strongly about this that they wrote a letter to the Chief Executive and the ESP Board to this effect. A positive reply was received assuring this would be done, re-affirming their commitment to working with the VCS at all levels and their intention to make nominations to the Enfield

Compact Review Board. An ECEN representative stated: *"It is exciting that they are starting to listen to us."*

The growing confidence of the ECEN was indicated by its proposal that an impact assessment be carried out on the VCS as part of a work plan, to go in the report to GOL. This would enable identification of the impacts the "local compact" had on the relationship between the VCS and statutory sector. The intention was for this to look at the negotiations of funders and the statutory sector and the value added via VCS engagement (value of the sector to the borough) and the assistance given to volunteers and individuals. One ECEN Representative suggested that the LBE could be approached to assist in funding the impact assessment, though as another ECEN member stated: *"Asking the council to contribute to this is just wasting time (it will just stall it)"* However, it is clear that ECEN Members felt that the existence of the ECEN has changed the way the VCS is perceived by the statutory sector (see Box 5.14). ECEN recently set up a "celebrating our successes" notice board for ECEN representatives and members to put up items that illustrate they are influencing the agenda (see Box 5.15). In contrast, in Haringey there was no evidence to suggest that the statutory sector was likening more to the VCS.

Box 5.14: Helping to Change Perceptions: CENs gain Confidence and Influence

"VCOs would not be able to influence the local agenda. The forum would not exist. The LBE would have no obligation to consult with the public at the level at which it does (strategic) and VCOs would not have access to such high powered individuals such as the Leader of the Council. This is power we have been given to by central government. We have earned the statutory sectors trust that we can go along to meeting and be constructive as opposed to being destructive. If we are not clear it is working, then we recognise the need to work together to make it better."

ECEN Representative

Box 5.15: Celebrating ECEN's Successes

- ECEN representatives on the Better Enfield Partnership
 1. Were influential in securing funding for the Edmonton Credit Union.
 2. Ensure that NRF funded "Street hawks" programme was mainstreamed.
- ECEN representatives on the Health and Social Care Board
 1. Influenced the continuing care criteria by making sure it did not go through the HSCB without debate.
 2. Ensuring that the VCS were consulted on the new criteria and ensuring all cases assessed under the existing criteria will be reviewed under the new 2005 criteria.
 3. Being the only VCOS representatives to be offered a meeting with the North London Strategic Health Authority.

5.2.3 At the LSP Level

The aim of this section is to explore what goes on "round the LSP table" when agendas/priorities are set and (invited) community groups are more "actively" involved. Key

questions here relate to whether VCO influence is apparent and real at this level and whether issues of inclusiveness, competence and impact are apparent. This section draws solely on observations in Haringey, because access was denied in Enfield to Local Strategic Partnership meetings. This is because in Enfield these meetings take place “behind closed doors,” without a public gallery.

In Haringey, the HSP was not validated until 2004 (most CENs/LSPs were validated during 2002) because of the problems associated in setting up the CEN. The council appointed the majority of representatives on the Haringey Strategic Partnership. There are 25 who sit on the HSP; which means it is too large to function executively and operates more like a forum. HSP meetings adopt a “round table” approach with a public gallery (see Figure 5.4), with both HSP representatives and members of the public gallery having to sign a “conflict of interest register” on arrival. For Haringey, the timing of establishing a CEN in the borough was poor. The draft priorities of the Community Strategy for Haringey had already been decided and agreed before the CEN was in place because of the time delays with the CEN. The Community Strategy also reflected the LBH Executive at that time, which has since changed.

VCO representation on the HSP was split between HarCEN and HAVCO, with three representatives each. Prior to HSP Meetings, voluntary sector representatives meet with the HarCEN Co-ordinator to discuss and prepare questions to be raised at the meeting. Throughout the meetings I observed, the HarCEN Co-ordinator continually checked that the representatives were able to follow the pace of the agenda, prompting them to speak and making sure that they had all the relevant paper work. Despite this, it was common for many partners to not receive the agenda of the meeting and minutes of the previous HSP meetings.

VCO representatives faced comments from statutory officials present at the LSP meetings that all the questions always came from the “left- hand side” (where voluntary sector representatives and a councillor always sat), indicating that community representatives tended to sit away from other sectoral representatives. There was a tendency for a voluntary sector representative to raise questions and only then the other voluntary sector representatives would join in the debate. Bailey (2005b) found similar results in that VCO representatives in his study tended to be labelled as the

"bad guys," because they were the ones who always asked questions. On one occasion, the voluntary sector representatives expressed that they still did not feel "effectively involved" (see Box 5.16)

Figure 5.4: Seating Plan information of HSP Meeting

		Leader of the Council	Chief Exec		Council (minute taker)
Chair of HarCEN Exec board					Council – Presenter of Council's Financial Strategy
Chief Exec Peace Alliance					X
Councillor (Z)					X
Africon Community Centre (Z)					X
	Over 50s Forum/ Neighbourhood Watch	X	Police Borough Commander	Health/ PCT	X

X - Representative present, but unsure as to what sector they are from

Shading - empty seats

Z - Late-comers

* Voluntary Sector representatives all sat to the left-hand side

Comment made to third sector representative by another official that all the questions always come from the left-hand side.

Box 5.16: VCOs not feeling effectively involved at the Strategic Level

"Local authorities don't want the voluntary sector to be strong and build. We are not given the paperwork or access to information and training."

Voluntary Sector Representative

"You state that the voluntary sector youth services will be housed here- what consultation has been undertaken regarding this? To what extent have VCOs been engaged at committee level in this agreement?"

Response – "HAVCO and its sub groups have been consulted"

Voluntary Sector Representative Response to youth service provision consultation

"I find some of these negative comments unbelievable, especially considering the money that has been put into this to move Haringey forward and there has been successes. NRF is in danger of disappearing in March 2006. The comments about the community not being asked I find disappointing – you are here at the partnership table engaged and involved. The structures are there – the CEN. It is how you use it that matters. If you feel that there are problems there, you need to address it with the agencies involved with the network. Engaging through the sub groups of the HSP is where the real work takes place. The government has given you a great vehicle to engage with agencies that you have not been able to reach – do take advantage of it."

Council Responses to Voluntary Sector

The overall impression from observing these LSP meetings in Haringey was that they were not especially useful forums for VCO influence.

5.3 Delivering Policy Initiatives

This section examines the VCO involvement in neighbourhood level delivery of the participation agenda. It draws on observations regarding Local Neighbourhood Development Workers in Enfield and also VCOs that were commissioned to run Consultative Forums and Thematic Groups on behalf of the CEN in Haringey, to determine how well the participation infrastructure set up is dealing with issues of VCO participation in policy making at the very local level.

In order to meet the 4th objective of the Single Community Programme, "support for community involvement in neighbourhood level delivery" EVA and the ECEN steering group had developed 3 new posts: (1) Two Local Neighbourhood Development Workers and a Learning Plan Developer. These posts were intended to operate at the neighbourhood level working with both residents and VCOs in the most deprived areas of Enfield to support community involvement in Enfield's neighbourhood renewal programme. The intention of these new posts was to have dedicated workers to increase ECEN's membership and engage the community in the LSP and the council's activities, thus assisting the ECEN in reaching a wider audience. This was initiated because in the previous year, the ECEN had faced a constant challenge in getting

information on local issues to and from VCOs, especially smaller VCOs. So it was with this in mind that the ECEN chose to focus much of its attention, in 2005 on improving communication between representatives and the wider VCS. The ECEN also intended to look at ways of assisting members to develop a system of two- way communication between their organisations and service users, so that information about neighbourhood renewal programmes and projects could be shared more widely within the community. However, as it can be seen by the decision making trail in Box 5.17 things did not go according to plan, with GOL continuing to dominate decisions made by VCOs.

Box 5.17: Decision Making Trail

Step 1
Action Agreed: Outreach work required in order to reach "hard to reach" organisations
Outcome: ECEN proposes two new appointments and GOL agrees the establishment of two new posts: Learning Plan Development Post and Local Neighbourhood Workers
Obstacles/ Problems: Not very successful in terms of applications received.
Step 2
Next Action Agreed: GOL review feasibility of having posts given that the posts contracts end in 2006, as this will mean if continue with recruitment campaign to fill the posts, the post holders will be in place for less than a year.
Outcome: Posts postponed by GOL
Step 3
Action Agreed: Posts advertised on MHT with a closing date of 15 th April with posts taken up in June

To develop participation ECEN also funded one off Enfield Community Awareness Raising and Empowerment (ECARE) Fund Projects (ECARE) due to the under-spend that occurred in the main budget 2002/03. Up to £3000 was given to VCOs to put events/ activities on that would raise awareness among their communities of interest/ service users around the aims and objectives of ECEN, the ESP and the Community Strategy and NRF. A number of research papers were also funded which highlighted the needs of particular groups, the services that currently exist for them and the gap in service provision for these groups. This revealed how groundwork needed to be done to bring VCOs on board initially and how this leads to subsequent gains in confidence

(see Box 5.18 for the research reports that were commissioned). These reports were subsequently taken to the ESP Board to raise further awareness and provided the ammunition for VCS to take issues forward and proved a useful tool for groups looking for future funding.

Box 5.18: Commissioned Research Reports

1. Report of a consultation day for older, lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender persons in Enfield
2. The need for legal advice in Enfield
3. Report of a survey exploring the issues for African and Caribbean carers in Enfield
4. Research report on the health needs of the Somali community in Enfield
5. Research Report into drugs awareness and misuse within the Turkish Speaking Community
6. Report of a meeting of environmental and conservation groups to review the Community Strategy and identify community projects to produce an Enfield Green Map
7. Survey of the Nigerian Community's knowledge of understanding and involvement in the SP and ECEN
8. Homelessness Resource Centre – A Study into the housing and support needs of 18-24 year old single homeless and 18 year old refugees, including recommendations on how these needs can be met
9. A study into the play and recreation needs of children and young people from the Congolese, Somali and Eastern European communities in Enfield
10. Pulling It All Together – A report on work funded by ECARE and carried out by the voluntary and community sector in Enfield.

ECEN also had a one-stop shop awareness event/ fair on the 18th March 2005 to promote the work of VCOs to the statutory sectors, so that they could see what the organisations actually do for the community and promote their services. This included information stalls, mini seminars, discussion groups and holistic therapy group.

However, it was announced at the ECEN Members meeting in May 2005 (which was observed) that there were some problems in relation to the administration and monitoring from the ECARE and ECEN commissioning programmes for VCOs (see Box 5.19), with 14 out of 29 projects still having outstanding issues. The process revealed VCO groups were not reading the contract properly and as a result they were not keeping receipts and were paying volunteers, rather than reimbursing them out of pocket expenses. Some organisations were not providing monitoring reports on time and had to be chased up, while some were even guilty of spending the funds on the wrong project or not for what they were awarded. There also appeared to be a lack of internal communication (i.e. one person knew the grant had been given, whilst the other members questioned what had happened or even why they had not been funded) and

with one organisation a conciliation organisation had to be involved before they would agree to provide receipts. This finding is significant because it provided an early indication of some of the problems VCOs were likely to face in service delivery commissioning activities. Consequently, roles and responsibilities of trustees and further management training have since been made a requirement for all funding through EVA.

Box 5.19: Problems with Commissioning VCOs to Expand the Scope of ECEN's Work

"Do not chase money, only apply for funding that fits with your aims and objectives or business plan and do not accept funds if you cannot manage them. Read the contract carefully and set in place the monitoring requirements at the start of the project. Be certain to cost the project fully, but not over- price it and turn down funds if they are inadequate. It is not a gift – you are not given the money because you are doing a good deed, you are given it because you are fit to supply and capable of making a change"

ECEN Representative

"We are aware of the issues in the statutory sector, but the difference is we are at the door to be taken seriously as effective and efficient providers – some of this does not demonstrate that. This has raised serious implications – questions may be raised now about the effectiveness of the sector groups, which are receiving public money and are accountable. Trustees are not always aware of their responsibilities and the legal framework in which they have the funding. It is difficult to promote the sector as a service deliver with this poor practice known by the Community Chest panel and EVA staff and trustees."

ECEN Representative

HarCEN chose to "support community involvement in neighbourhood level delivery" by commissioning a series of second tier VCOs to run Consultative Forums or Thematic Groups. One of these was the Haringey Refugee Action Group (HRAG), which makes a good case example. The HRAG was an existing forum that had been in place long before the birth of HarCEN. This was why it was seen in a better place to deliver on engaging with refugee and asylum seeker based groups. The HRAG was given the task of engaging with groups in the community to inform them that the structure of the council had changed and build awareness amongst the community about the CEN/ LSP structures and the opportunities for VCO participation implied by these new structures. In Haringey BME groups make up 55-58% of the borough's population, but although these groups are actually the majority population it is accepted that the needs of these groups are often not actually being met. This is why the BME and HRAG forums were set up to enable groups to voice their opinions/ concerns about what issues affect these community groups.

However, at these HRAG meetings a number of key issues arose. Firstly, very few refugee organisations were taking part and there were concerns about how their "voices" would be heard, if they were not present, given that the HRAG was tied into

HarCEN, which fed into the decision making process of the statutory system (the HSP) (see Box 5.20). It had been planned to conduct 30- minute outreach work/ sessions with refugee groups to find out their concerns, and see how HRAG could be more open to them, but staffing shortages at the Racial Equality Council (REC) meant insufficient time was available to see many of the organisations. It was proposed that HRAG needed to find the easiest way to outreach refugee groups, and as the meetings were based at the Selby Centre, they should try to round up some of these groups and make it easier for them to attend, but in most cases these groups only had one officer, making their attendance at meetings difficult. HRAG needed to think of different methods of engagement for this group, such as mail outs that would at least enable these groups to be represented in some way and be fed into the process. Certainly something needed to be considered for the next annual report. So HRAG proposed to employ a consultative outreach officer to produce a report for HarCEN on how the HRAG could outreach to more “hard to reach” groups. But the HRAG could not commence on this until they received their funding from HarCEN, which they had been waiting to be released since February 2005.

Box 5.20: Involving Refugee Groups

“How can we have “voices” to the top of the decision making process, if none of the grassroots groups are taking part in the meetings. We need to find new methods of engaging” HRAG Representative

By June 2005, the HRAG had still not received their funding and communication between the HRAG and HarCEN broke down. HarCEN stated that HRAG would not be receiving anymore funding, as they believed the service was only partly delivered, despite the HRAG needing the funds in order to carry out the activity they had been commissioned to do. This clearly indicated the first (of several) “power struggles” between HarCEN and second tier VCOs, and is another indicator of apparent failure of HarCEN to establish a trustworthy relationship with parts of the local VCS from an early stage.

The Children and Young Peoples Thematic Group experienced similar problems. This group had just ten members, of which only some completed HarCEN membership forms. Members were reluctant to join a group that was associated with HarCEN because of the lack of clarification of roles between HarCEN and HAVCO and the in-fighting that had ensued. Instead of looking at pro-active ways of dealing with this

problem, the Children and Young Peoples Thematic Group commissioning funds were terminated with immediate effect by HarCEN.

In contrast, the Faith Forum was the only second tier VCO that remained commissioned by HarCEN. The purpose of the forum was to provide Haringey's diverse faith communities a platform to voice their opinions on issues that concern the borough as a whole ranging from education to health and crime and to inform faith groups about the thinking of local government and the agenda of the local authority. Attendance at the Faith Forums was always extremely high with 59, 52 and 48 participants attending respectively at the three meetings I observed, all of which were at different venues to further increase participation.

The Faith Forum has allowed VCOs to be informed about important developments, participate in workshops and question and answer sessions. For example, at the second Faith Forum meeting held on 16th February 2005 a presentation by HAVCO was given on the "local compact" (an agreement that improves relations between local public bodies and VCOs for mutual advantage, setting out values, principles and commitments for how best to work together). This revealed that the "Haringey compact" had only just been launched in November 2004, as Haringey had been granted a year long extension for setting up the "compact" because of the late development of the CEN and had just begun to look to recruit "compact champions" (internal and external) to promote the value of partnerships and provide guidance and raise awareness of "the compact" in Haringey. One community leader stated, *"It is amazing what is going on that we don't know about."* It is perhaps the importance of "community" and "partnership" that has kept the impetus going with this forum (see Box 5.21)

Box 5.21: The Importance of Partnership within the Faith Forum

"The launch of this forum must not splinter out into individual groups – we must work together in partnership."

Faith Forum Representative

"We believe that the values of faith communities – and indeed the fact that different communities have values in common – can be a powerful tool to bringing about a more just society that is truly cohesive and multi- cultural People don't just live in houses, they live in communities In every community there is work to be done. In every nation there are wounds to heal. In every heart there is power to do it."

Faith Forum Representative

"Communities can be exceptionally powerful - Communities need to be there when programmes are rolled out."

Faith Forum Representative

"We must build bridges not walls. We can do a lot as a community; we have a lot to offer."

Faith Forum Representative

These observations suggest that in both Enfield and Haringey there have been problems in delivering the participation agenda to the very local level of the neighbourhood and smallest VCOs and finding a meaningful role for them in the participation infrastructure so far established. Neither the "worker led" approach of Enfield nor the "thematic group" approach of Haringey, were completely successful, perhaps because the first was not sustained, and the latter undermined by issues of failure of trust.

5.4 Conclusions

This chapter based on observation of the setting up and early working of the CEN infrastructure, and on the analysis of internal documents have produced findings as well as issues for further research. In Enfield, ECEN was set up swiftly on the basis of existing organisations and though not entirely inclusive (i.e. low BME representation), soon established an electoral process, a working system of thematic groups and links with the LSP process. An early review (the support programme) of structures and procedures established a useful tradition of critical self- appraisal. The VCS accepted the new structures and participated actively, and had the confidence to insist on a change of attitude by the statutory sector (council officers) to their presence, suggesting scope for the evolution of the CENs role and influence from VCOs. Attempts to extend participation to the most local level were not however so successful.

In Haringey the establishment of the CEN was developed, and despite being proceeded by a rational and broadly based consultation process, the structures set up (HarCEN) created the scope for confusion of roles and conflict with other organisations

(HAVCO and VAH), as did the system established for thematic forums. The attempt to review procedures was well intentioned and initially effective, but poor timing in the final stages did not help to promote necessary trust between the VCO sector and HarCEN, while attempts to "reach out" to excluded sectors had very limited success. This observational evidence is not definitive, but it does identify some key issues for more detailed exploration. This is done by looking at the experience and opinions of a broad set of VCO representatives in Chapter 6, and sharing the considered views of key VCO players in Chapter 7 and 8, where more theoretical issues will also be highlighted and the experiences/ evidence will be interpreted in relation to the wider theoretical discourse.

CHAPTER 6

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT NETWORKS AND LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS: CHARACTERISTICS AND EXPERIENCES OF VCO PARTICIPANTS

6. BACKGROUND

Having established a picture of how the infrastructure for VCO participation was set up in the two study boroughs, and how it appeared to be functioning, the next stage of the research was to move to a greater understanding of the characteristics, motives, expectations and experiences of the VCO sector organisations involved in the participation process. This was achieved via a questionnaire survey of a broad selection of VCO representatives of the CENs of the two boroughs. The need for this became apparent from participant observations (stage 3) and discussions with the Co-ordinator of the Enfield Community Empowerment Network (ECEN), which indicated that no baseline data existed in the two case study localities with regards to:

- Members attitudes towards the operation of the Community Empowerment Networks and the effectiveness of their working
- The level of understanding and/ or awareness VCOs had about what was going on in the field of urban regeneration and their control over it
- The type of VCOs taking an interest in urban regeneration issues locally and those that were not.
- Whether members felt community participation had in fact changed since the existence of CENs.
- The level of involvement of VCOs in the local regeneration agenda.

It is for these reasons I was asked by ECEN to design a Community Empowerment Network Questionnaire (see Appendix C) that would provide them with some evidence based data to improve the effectiveness of their working. It was also agreed that the data would be used as part of this thesis. Once the Community Empowerment Network Questionnaire had been designed HarCEN showed interest in using it on similar terms. The questionnaire that is the basis of this chapter thus had a dual aim: a research tool for the thesis and an input into the policy system, initially in Enfield and subsequently in Haringey.

The Community Empowerment Network Questionnaire was reviewed at the Steering Group of the Enfield Community Empowerment Network for two months (April - May 2005). After some initial anxiety it was subsequently agreed by the Steering Group and was circulated to all full members of the Enfield Community Empowerment Network, after I had presented the rationale of my research, together with details of the questionnaire and its uses at the ECEN Member's Meeting on 24th May 2005. The Community Empowerment Network Questionnaire was mailed out on 24th June 2005 to 133 organisations based in Enfield. A reminder flyer was also mailed out on 9th August 2005 to all ECEN full Members because responses were slow. In Haringey, a considerable amount of time was spent liaising with HarCEN's Co-ordinator, core office staff and the Chair of HarCEN in order for the questionnaire to be approved and circulated to HarCEN Members. The Community Empowerment Network Questionnaire was mailed out in Haringey to 113 core members on 27th July and 3rd August 2005 respectively.

The CEN questionnaire was circulated by HarCEN and ECEN on my behalf using their members' mailing lists and was completed by a "named" key person from the member organisations of the respective CENs. Steps were then taken to increase the return rate. For example, in Haringey it was arranged to have a stall at the HarCEN Conference (Annual General Meeting) on the 28th September 2005 with questionnaires, research briefs, posters and a posting box for those that completed the questionnaire on site. For a two- week period in November 2005 I also conducted the questionnaire as a telephone survey with organisations that had not until then responded. 12 VCOs in Haringey and 8 VCOs in Enfield responded via the telephone survey.

The total response rate for the questionnaire comprised of a total of 59 VCOs (24%), 30 of which were ECEN Members and 29 of which were HarCEN Members (see Table 6.1). This sample included VCO CEN Members, CEN Board Representatives and CEN co-opted Consultative Forums.

Table 6.1: Sample and Population Composition

Size	Enfield	Haringey	Total
Population	133 (54%)	113 (46%)	246 (100%)
Sample	30 (51%)	29 (49%)	59 (100%)

6.1 Scope and Limitations of “Population” and its relation to the “Universe” of VCOs

The total number of VCOs in Haringey and Enfield remains unknown, so the population for this survey was taken to be registered full members of the CENs (246 organisations). However, there was also a proportion of VCOs that we knew to be “active” in the CENs activities, which did not fall into this “population” (see Figure 6.1). These included “associate members” of the CENs and VCOs participating through other routes such as the “consultative forums” and “thematic groups” that were not members of the CEN. These were estimated from various sources to total some 920 VCOs. Unfortunately, no definitive record existed of all VCS organisations, which is quite normal within the VCS. There was also a level of uncertainty of the number of CEN members in Haringey.

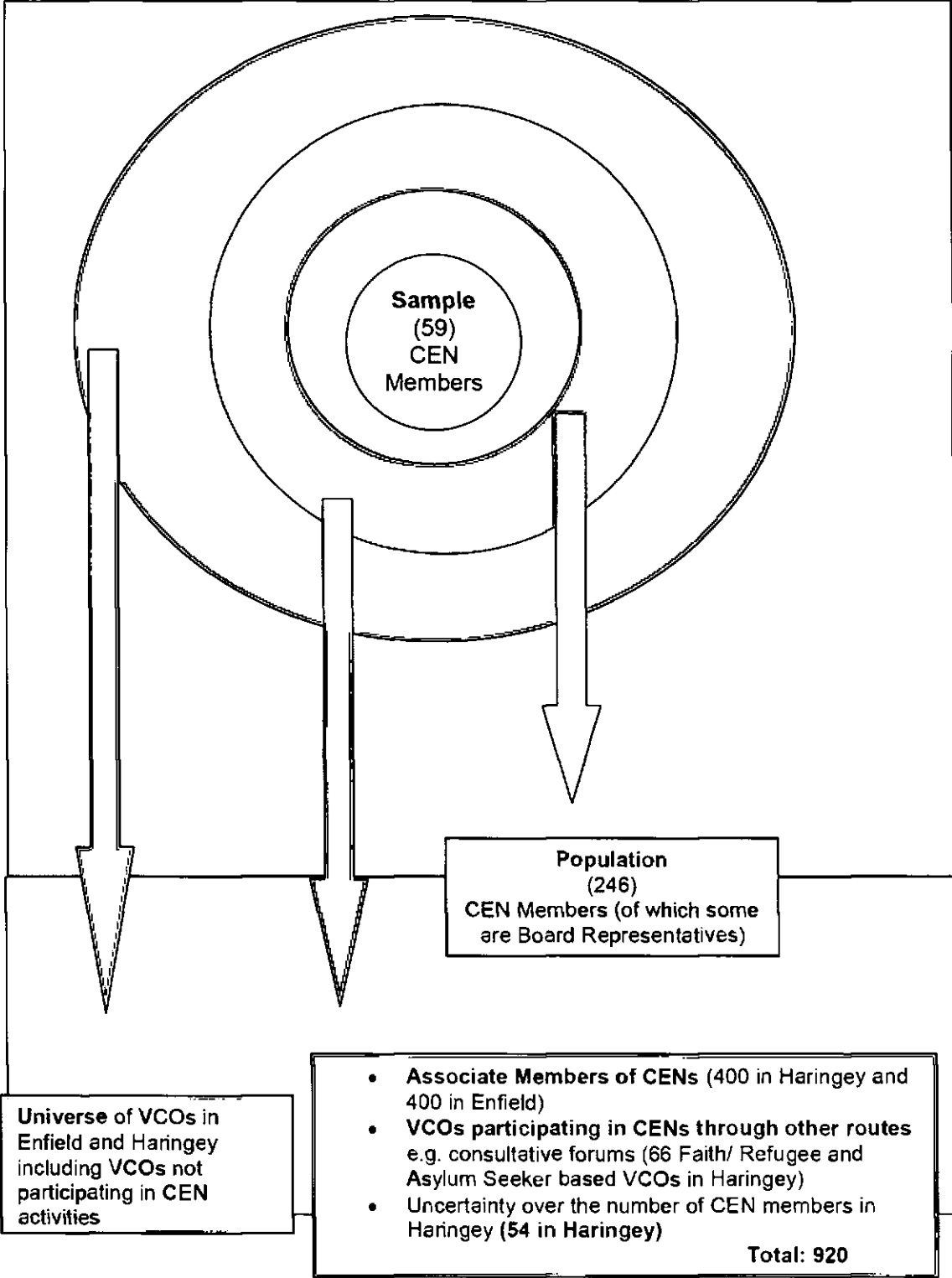
An implication of this sample was that it was somewhat restricted with certain groups less likely to be part of the CENs, such as smaller newer groups, and faith and refugee and asylum seeker groups, which if they were participating in the CENs activities were doing so through other routes such as the Consultative Forums. Consequently, the restrictions of the sample were mainly a result of the differing ways the two boroughs went about setting up/ establishing the CENs and how and why VCS groups became part of the CENs (see Chapter 5). This said, the sample was, broadly representative of the actual CEN membership, which is what I was striving for, and provides insights where none were currently available into the workings of the CENs from the VCS viewpoint. For example, in terms of the “population” of VCOs it can be seen that in the case of Enfield there are 6 VCOs that sit on the ECEN Board and 28 ECEN Representatives, which sit on an array of Thematic Partnerships, and the questionnaire sample managed to capture 4 of the ECEN Board Members and 13 ECEN Representatives.

In Haringey, the HarCEN Board had a total of 12 places, but consisted of just 9 VCOs during 2004/05 and 2005/06. During 2005/06 Board Members were re-elected, 3 stepped down and 3 new Board Members were elected. Some of these Board Members were also HSP Representatives. HarCEN also out-sourced activities to 6 VCOs to run Consultative Forums and a further 4 VCOs to run Thematic Groups on

varying issues associated with the Thematic Partnerships of the LSP. The questionnaire sample captured 8 of these VCOs. The election of Thematic Partnership Representatives was being allocated among these organisations (and any others through co-option) at the time of the survey. There appeared to be a pattern among non-respondents of HarCEN representatives, in that it primarily consisted of BME based organisations where language may have been a barrier to completion of the questionnaire. This concern was raised with the HarCEN Co-ordinator in the initial stages of circulation, but they advised that this would not be a barrier to responses. However, as a large proportion of the Haringey VCOs completed the questionnaire using a telephone survey format, this suggests that there may have been some basis to my initial concerns.

In the Enfield "population" of VCOs, the VCOs with most responsibilities within ECEN were predominately drawn from national VCOs (i.e. local branches of nationally active and organised bodies) with 3 ECEN Board Members and 13 ECEN Representatives coming from national organisations. In contrast, in Haringey there were only 3 national VCOs in the role of HarCEN Board Members or organisations that were responsible for Thematic Groups/ Consultative Forums.

Figure 6.1: The VCO Sample population in Enfield and Haringey



6.2 Content of the Questionnaire

6.2.1 The Introductory Statement and Stages of the Questionnaire Design

The introductory statement informed the potential respondents about the study and why they should spend the time completing it, together with anonymity and confidentiality pledges. In addition, it explained how the data were to be used and who it would be available to, and contact details in case respondents wished to ask questions about the research. The Community Empowerment Network questionnaire underwent piloting before being distributed to VCS organisations that were members of the CENs; so as to iron out any flaws, ensure that the right questions were being asked and that the appropriate response options were provided. The content and layout of the questionnaire was scrutinised and agreed by the Steering group/ Board of the CENs in both the case study areas before distribution took place (Bryman, 2001, Langdridge, 2004).

6.2.2 The Content of the Questionnaire

There were three sections to the Community Empowerment Network Questionnaire:

1. About you and your organisation (a profiling exercise)
2. The Community Empowerment Network (focus on scope of involvement and experience so far)
3. The Local Strategic Partnership – Relationships between the voluntary and community sector and statutory bodies (focus on judgement of experiences so far)

The questionnaire is reproduced as Appendix C. Section one consisted of basic questions about VCS organisations such as the type and duration of the organisations (see Questions 1-4), number of employees (see Questions 5- 7), the localities that the organisations serve (see Question 8) and the grant funding of the organisations (see Questions 9-11). The target group and activity/ sector of the organisations was also questioned (see Questions 12-13). Therefore, section one of the questionnaire comprise the variables that all other sections of the questionnaire are analysed against. Several sources were used to assist in compiling section one of the questionnaire particularly with regards to the categories used for the target group and activity/ sector

of the organisations (see Questions 12-13). These included HarCEN's Public Management Framework (PMF) Questionnaire, HarCEN's Community Suppliers Initiative Application Form¹⁰ and Faith Communities and Social Action in Haringey Research.¹¹

Section two of the questionnaire consisted of questions around the CENs themselves. This section focused on whether organisations were members' and/ or representatives of the Networks (see Questions 14-15) and the roles and authority they had within the Networks (see Questions 16- 18). Section two also looked at the benefits VCOs think they receive from their involvement in the CENs (see Question 19). VCOs were also asked what other services they would like to see provided by the CENs (see Question 20). This question was adapted from HarCEN's PMF Questionnaire. Section two concludes with respondents awareness of any VCOs that have chosen not to be involved in the CENs and the perceived reasons for these organisations non-participation (see Questions 21-23). This attempted to uncover some barriers to VCO participation via the opinions of more involved VCO representatives.

Section three of the questionnaire consisted of questions about the relationship between the VCOs and statutory bodies involved in the Local Strategic Partnerships and was designed to elicit judgements based on experience so far and may be considered a key part of the survey in relation to the thesis. Question 24 looks at how VCOs rate their level of participation. This is a simplification of Arnstein's (1969) "Ladder of Participation" (see Chapter 1) for ease of completion for the respondents. Question 25 looked at the perceived balance of power among the partners of the Local Strategic Partnerships on a Likert point scale of 1-9 (least powerful to most powerful). This question is an adaptation of Burns *et al* (2004) "What is the balance of power within the initiative?" question (p24). A Likert scale of 1-9 is used, so that in the analysis comparisons could be made with Burns *et al* (2004) 9- point "Level of participation scale" (p60). Question 26 looks at VCOs main roles within the Local Strategic Partnerships. These categories were taken from Burns *et al* (2004) "In what ways and to what extent are communities involved?" question (p26).

¹⁰ PMF Workshop at HarCEN's Members Meeting on 16/02/05

¹¹ Presentation at Faith Forum by Elizabeth Simon of London Churches Group for Social Action on 22/11/04

Question 27 tested whether the LSP had been successful in targeting local needs and building better relationships with community organisations and the voluntary sector, using a 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). Question 28 looked at whether the LSP had found different working styles across sectors, conflicting interests, domination of the local authority, lack of co-operation between community groups or lack of commitment from some of the sectors significant, using a 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). Question 29 looked at how effective consensus protocols, partnership protocols, conflict of interest registers, scrutiny procedures and accountability requirements had been in promoting effective partnership working, using a 5 point Likert scale (very ineffective- very effective). The statements for Questions 27 to 29 were taken from the findings of the Greater London Enterprise/ Association of London Government (GLA/ ALG) (2003) Report on Local Strategic Partnerships and Neighbourhood Renewal in London (p36- 38). This was so as to be able to make comparisons between the regional findings of the GLA/ ALG (2003) report and my own localised data.

Question 30 related to VCOs perceptions of leadership to support community participation. This was an adaptation of Burns *et al* (2004) "Is there strong leadership to support community participation?" question (p30). Question 31 asks VCOs to rate the six principles of community participation Chanan (2003) identified in the Urban White Paper: Our Towns and Cities, using a five point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). Therefore, this question was attempting to make linkages between the policy discourse (see Chapter 4) and the policy practice (or interpretation) that were made by VCOs. Question 32 comprises thirteen statements about the CENs and the LSPs, some of which are positively worded and some of which are negatively worded with respondents required to rate each of these statements on a 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The statements were taken from the findings and recommendations of the National Audit Office (NAO) (2004) Report entitled "Getting Citizens Involved: Community Participation in Neighbourhood Renewal" (p11-15), so as to be able to make comparisons between the national findings of the NAO (2004) report and my own localised data.

The Community Empowerment Network Questionnaire ends with some final comments: whether the respondents would like to receive feedback on the results of the

questionnaire and whether they would be willing to participate in a further stage of the research. It is predominately from this sample and these responses that the interviewees' were drawn from (stage five of the research process) reported in Chapter 7.

6.3 Section 1: About the VCO Sample: A Profile and Comparison with the Population

6.3.1 Type and Age of the VCOs

Looking across the sample as a whole (59 cases) they predominately consider themselves as voluntary organisations (86%), with the remainder of the sample comprised of just two community businesses (both of which are in Haringey), one social enterprise and one friendly society (both in Enfield). 41% of these organisations are charities, 25% of which are Enfield based. A further 25% of the sample is incorporated companies limited by guarantee with charitable status (see Table 6.2). Most of the organisations were well established and had been in existence for over ten years (52%), followed by 27% of the sample having been in existence for one to five years (see Table 6.3). 7% of the Haringey organisations had been in existence for less than a year, perhaps indicating that HarCEN was making a greater attempt to reach newer embryonic organisations or that there were more younger VCOs in Haringey

Table 6.2: Perceptions regarding Type of Organisations among Respondents

Type of Organisation	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
Voluntary Organisations	83%	90%	86%
Social Enterprise	0%	3%	2%
Community Business	7%	0%	3%
Friendly Society	0%	3%	2%
Other	10%	3%	7%
			100
Charity	31%	50%	41%
Incorporated	21%	7%	13%
Incorporated Charity	27%	23%	25%
Unincorporated	14%	13%	14%
Other	7%	7%	7%
			100

Table 6.3: Age of Organisations

Age of Organisation	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
Less than a year	7%	0%	3%
1-5 years	27%	27%	27%
5- 10 years	14%	20%	17%
Over 10 years	52%	53%	53%

A distinction is made in the VCO literature between “voluntary” and “community” organisations, (see Chapter 1). “Community” organisations are sometimes seen as a distinctive subset of “voluntary” organisations, having a more local focus and less formal structure (Chanan *et al*, 2000, Taylor, 1997). The sample was examined with this distinction in mind. At first glance there appeared to be a lack of “community groups” in the sample (see Table 6.4). In order to verify the responses, supplementary sources were used to classify the organisations in the sample as either “voluntary” or “community” organisations in line with the definitions of Reading (1994), Taylor (1997), Chanan, *et al* (2000) and Williams (2002b), which were discussed in Chapter 1. It is expected that fewer “community” groups were present in the sample because by their nature they are smaller and less well established.

From this re-classification 64% of the organisations in the total sample can be defined as “voluntary” organisations, whilst 21% can be defined as “community” organisations. “Community” organisations appear to be more prominent in the Haringey sample (41%) than in the Enfield sample (30%). The fact that the organisations in the sample do not “perceive” themselves as “community groups” and are more comfortable with the term “voluntary organisation,” indicates that to these VCOs this distinction often does not matter and perhaps the distinctions made between the voluntary and community sectors are actually of less significance to the organisations than the academic literature would have us suggest. From looking at the organisations in the total sample it can be seen that 43 of them (73%) are local voluntary and community organisations and 16 of the organisations (27%) are national organisations i.e. local branches of nationally active and organised bodies (see Table 6.4). This distinction is of more relevance than the “community/voluntary” distinction, as later analysis bears out.

Table 6.4: National versus Local organisations

Type of Organisation	National	Local	Total
Total Sample	27%	73%	100
Haringey Sample	17%	83%	100
Enfield Sample	37%	63%	100

In fact, when comparing the two samples from each borough separately, it is apparent that the Haringey sample predominately consisted of local VCO organisations (83%) with just 17% of the Haringey sample comprised of national organisations. The Enfield sample also had a greater number of local organisations (63%) compared to national organisations; however, Enfield did have a much higher proportion of national organisations (37%) than Haringey, largely concentrated around national health and disability campaigns. These differences may reflect the tactics each borough used in setting up its CEN (see Chapter 5).

Table 6.5: Target Group Differences between Haringey and Enfield VCOs

Target Groups for VCOs	Haringey %	Enfield %	Total %
Health/ Disabilities	8	16	24
Children/ Young People	11	9	20
BME/ Refugee and Asylum	12	5	17
Employment and Training	11	6	17
Arts/ Environment/ Crime/ Other	9	5	14
Faith/ Housing	4	4	8

In terms of the main target group(s) or client groups for the organisations, the predominant groups across the total sample were Health and Disabilities, Children and Young People, BME and Refugee and Asylum Seekers, Employment and Training, Arts, Environment, Crime or Other and Faith and Housing (see Tables 6.5 and Table 6.6). However, very few organisations in Haringey were concerned with Health and Disabilities, supporting the participant observation findings that this sector was under represented at the CEN start-up. In contrast, Health and Disabilities was the largest target group for Enfield VCOs. Understandably, given the diverse and transient population in Haringey, BME communities and Refugee and Asylum Seekers were Haringey's principal target group.

Table 6.6: Target Groups for VCOs in order of importance for the Total Sample

	Primary Target Group of the Organisation	%	Secondary Target Group of the Organisation	%	Third Target Group of the Organisation	%
1	Health/ ¹² Disabilities	25%	Health/ Disabilities	24%	Children and Young People/ Parents and Family Groups ¹³	29%
2	Arts/ Environment/ Crime/ Other ¹⁴	24%	Employment and Training ¹⁵	22%	Employment and Training	25%
3	Faith/ Housing ¹⁶	19%	Children and Young People/ Parents and Family Groups	20%	Health/ Disabilities	21%
4	Children and Young People/ Parents and Family Groups	17%	BME/ Refugee and Asylum/ Anti Racism ¹⁷	19%	BME/ Refugee and Asylum/ Anti Racism	12.5%
5	BME/ Refugee and Asylum/ Anti Racism	15%	Arts/ Environment/ Crime/ Other	15%	Arts/ Environment/ Crime/ Other	12.5%

6.3.2 VCO Sample versus Population

Before embarking on the analysis of the individual questionnaire items it is necessary to assess the reliability and representativeness of the sample as a portrait of the total population of CEN Members. This is done by looking for any statistical significance of differences between the sample data that has been observed/ recorded from the questionnaire responses, and the population of all the VCOs in Enfield and Haringey that were known members of the respective CENs in these two locations, (but had chosen not to respond to the questionnaire), on a number of criteria:

- Whether the survey sample size obtained reflected that to be expected from VCOs in Haringey and Enfield
- The type of the voluntary and community organisations in terms of whether they were national or local organisations

¹² Includes Health, Disabilities, Elderly and Substance Abusers

¹³ Includes Children and Youth People, Single Parents, Families Under Stress and Women target groups

¹⁴ Includes Arts and Music, Environment, Crime Prevention/ Ex-offenders and Other Target Groups

¹⁵ Includes Employment and Training, Education and Unemployment Target Groups

¹⁶ Includes Faith and Housing and Homelessness Target Groups

¹⁷ Includes BME Communities, Anti- Racism and Refugee and Asylum Seekers Target Groups

- The type of the voluntary and community organisations in terms of whether their principle focus was around:
 1. Health/ disabilities
 2. BME/ Refugee or Asylum Seekers/ Anti Racism
 3. Children and Young People/ Parents or Family groups
 4. Housing/ Residents Associations and Faith groups¹⁸
 5. Employment/ Education and Training based groups
 6. Arts, Environmental or Other groups

This evaluation was done using standard Chi-square tests where the proportions of the relevant attributes occurred in the sample ("observed") were compared with what would have been expected from the distribution of the same attributes in the population.

The main points that emerged from the chi-square calculations were:

- The whole population was split with 133 Enfield VCOs (54%) and 113 Haringey VCOs (46%) and the "sample" was in the same proportions between the boroughs, (statistically identical according to Chi-square).
- The Enfield population was split 71% local VCOs and 29% national, and the sample was split in similar proportions.
- The Haringey population was split - 86% local VCOs and 14% national, and the sample is statistically representative of this.
- The Enfield population was split between different groups - 31% BME, 24% health, 15% housing or faith, 14% arts, environment or other, 9% employment and training, and 7% children and young people and the sample is representative of this.
- The Haringey population was split between different groups - 39% BME, 24% arts, environment or other, 12% children and young people, 10% employment and

¹⁸ These organisations are grouped together because GOL guidelines on CENs stipulate that attempts must be made to encourage participation of Faith and Resident based groups – groups that previous urban regeneration policies ignored.

training, 8% housing or faith, and 7% health, and the sample is representative of this.

The Haringey and Enfield samples were statistically different in their balance of local verses national organisations, suggesting the two boroughs are different in this respect (Enfield has more national branches). The Haringey and Enfield samples were also statistically different in their balance of health- based organisations (Enfield had more health orientated VCOs) and BME based groups (Haringey had more BME orientated VCOs). This can be partly explained by the significant statistical difference in the balance of local verses national organisations, because health based organisations predominantly appeared to be local branches of nationally active and organised bodies, whilst BME based organisations were predominately local organisations. Haringey also had a higher proportion of "community" groups, which also were local in character. With the representativeness of the sample established, and also the contrasts between the Enfield and Haringey samples clarified, we can now look at the responses from the sample survey, to first establish a profile of the VCOs and then probe their experience of participation and attitudes towards it so far.

6.3.3 Size of the VCOs

Across the total sample the predominant size of an organisation's management committee or board of trustees was under 10 people (74%). It was to be expected that the majority of the organisations were dependent on volunteers. In fact, 81% of the sample had 1- 20 volunteers on their books and a further 10% had between 21 – 40 volunteers. 3% had 81-100 volunteers registered, although this only included national organisations located in Enfield.

Very few organisations employed full time staff, with 81% of the total sample having 0-5 full time employees. A similar pattern was expressed in relation to part time employees with 84% of the sample having 0-5 part time workers and a mere 15% of the sample comprised of 6 and above part time employees. Part time workers in greater numbers than 20 were mainly found in Enfield based organisations. The organisations were mainly member's organisations; 61% comprise less than 100 members and 28% had between 100-500 members (see Table 6.7).

Table 6.7: Size of VCOs

Size of Management Committee	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
0-5	21%	23%	23%
6-10	45%	60%	51%
11-15	10%	17%	14%
16+	24%	0%	12%
Full Time Employees			
0-5	83%	80%	81%
6-10	7%	13%	11%
11+	10%	7%	8%
Part Time Employees			
0-5	86%	83%	85%
6+	14%	17%	15%
Volunteers			
1-20	80%	83%	81%
21-40	10%	10%	10%
41-60	10%	0%	5%
61-80	0%	0%	0%
81- 100	0%	7%	4%
Members			
Under 100	62%	60%	61%
100-500	34%	23%	29%
501-1000+	4%	17%	10%
Clients			
Non Client based	48%	50%	49%
Under 100	17%	17%	17%
100-500	14%	20%	17%
501- 1000+	21%	13%	17%

The picture then is of VCO organisations with a small management committee (under 10) dependent on volunteers (up to 20) with few full time employees (under 5) but with a reasonable membership base (over 100). Those organisations that were the largest on these dimensions were mainly located in Enfield.

6.3.4 Funding and Funding Bodies/ Agreements: Grants and SLAs

66% of the total sample was currently in receipt of grant funding, whilst 14% had been funded in the past, and 20% were not grant funded at all (see Table 6.8). The number of organisations that had been funded in the past was fractionally higher in Haringey perhaps illustrating the larger funding pots available in Haringey, while those organisations that were not grant funded were fractionally higher in Enfield.

Unsurprisingly, the local authority (LBE or LBH) was the first principal funder for those organisations currently receiving grant funding or which had received grant funding in

the past (51%). Principal funders also included NRF and CEF (17%), Community Chest and Community Learning Chest (14%), Big Lottery Community Fund (12%), Awards for All (4%) and the local PCT (2%). Haringey based organisations were more likely to acknowledge funding and/or make the distinction between NRF, CEF, Community Chest and Community Learning Chest monies.

Table 6.8: Receipt of Grant Funding and Principal Funding Bodies

Grant Funding	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
Been Funded in the Past, but Not Now	17%	10%	14%
Currently Funded	66%	67%	66%
Not Funded	17%	23%	20%
Principal Funders			
Local Authority	54%	48%	51%
Community Chest	16%	13%	14%
NRF/ CEF	21%	13%	17%
Big Lottery	12%	13%	12%
PCT	4%	13%	2%
Awards for All	5%	0%	4%

Table 6.9: Level of Grant Funding Received

Level of Grant Funding	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
Funded, but Amount Not Declared	30%	35%	32%
Under £1000	5%	0%	2%
£1000 – 20,000	8%	14%	11%
£21,000 – 40,000	0%	17%	9%
£41,000 – 60,000	17%	8%	13%
£61,000 – 80,000	5%	0%	4%
£81,000 – 100,000	5%	8%	6%
£101,000 – 500,000	25%	14%	19%
£501,000+	5%	4%	4%

Most organisations appeared to currently receive grant funding ranging from £1,000 - £60,000 (33%). At the top end of this range (£41,000 - £60,000) included housing and BME organisations in Haringey and in Enfield it included credit union and transport organisations. At the mid end of this range (£20,000 - £40,000) included organisations entirely from Enfield, which focussed on disability, environmental and BME issues. The organisations receiving the highest level of grant funding (£61,000 -£100,000) included organisations from Haringey that had a BME, refugee and asylum seeker or crime focus, and in Enfield, organisations with an Art or BME focus. However, 32% that were currently receiving grant funding or had done in the past were unwilling to reveal their organisation's actual grant funding during the last accounting year. Of those that did respond with details, only 2% received less than £1,000 in grant funding. 19% received

£101,000 – 500, 000 in grant aid. A few (4%) received large grants of £501,000 plus (see Table 6.9).

Surprisingly, despite the current agenda to outsource statutory service provision to VCOs in the form of Service Level Agreements (SLAs), just 29% of the organisations were currently commissioned to carry out Service Level Agreements for which they were paid and of this, 15% of this 29% either did not declare their SLA funding during the last accounting year or failed to make a distinction between their grant funding and SLA monies, with comments, such as this, frequently made:

“Unclear what is meant by Service Level Agreements therefore put all funding under grants.”
Health Care Representative

Therefore, this relatively low figure (29%) might be an under estimate reflecting that some respondents were not clear as to what a SLA is.

71% of the organisations surveyed were not carrying out Service Level Agreements and in most instances clearly did not understand the terminology, indicating the agenda for this had not filtered through to the local VCOs in the sample (at the time of the survey), (see Table 6.10). There was also evidence to suggest that SLAs discriminated against smaller/ less established organisations because they did not possess the desired “track record” to carry out commissioned activities and instead larger well-established VCOs were favoured. The aim of current policy is for the smaller organisations to gain a needed “track record” of delivering services through gaining Community Chest and Community Learning Chest contracts in the hope that success will allow them to progress on to carrying out larger commissioning of services. The PEACE Alliance in Haringey was an organisation, which was held up as a particular role model for the smaller VCOs in Haringey, because just 5 years ago it was a small VCO that applied for a Community Chest contract, and was successful, it is now a large VCO with a national profile.

In sum, the majority of the VCOs were grant dependent for income, with the local authority the main funding source, typically under £100, 000 per annum, although 29% also had contracts to deliver services on behalf of local authorities, again typically under £100,000. Large SLAs were confined to two “national” VCOs in Enfield, while VCOs seem not so much excluded as unaware of SLAs.

Table 6.10: Service Level Agreements

Service Level Agreements	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
Do not Carry out SLA	72%	70%	71%
Carries out SLA	28%	30%	29%
Carries out SLA, but do not declare Monies	3%	6%	5%
Do not make a distinction between Grants and SLA Monies	11%	10%	10%
SLA Contract Under £100,000	14%	7%	10%
SLA Contract £101,000- £500,000	0%	7%	4%
	28%	30%	29%
Service Level Agreements	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
Local Authority Principal Funder of those VCOs that carry out SLA	75%	56%	65%
Other* Principal Funders of those VCOs that carry out SLA	25%	44%	35%

*Other includes PCT, NRF/CEF, Scarman Trust or Sure Start

6.3.5 Services Provided and Location of Services

The principal activity of the organisations in the sample is set out in Tables 6.11 and 6.12.

Table 6.11: Principal Activity/ Sector for VCOs in order of importance: Total Sample

	Primary Activity	%	Secondary Activity	%	Third Activity	%
Activity	Advice	45%	Advice	21%	Outreach	23%
	Other*	17%	Outreach	20%	Training	20%
	Education	13%	Training	20%	Employment	17%
	Outreach	11%	Education	13%	Other*	17%
	Counselling	6%	Counselling	11%	Advice	7%
	Training	4%	Other	10%	Education	10%
	Employment	2%	Employment	4%	Counselling	3%
	Enterprise	2%	Enterprise	1%	Enterprise	3%

Table 6.12: Activities of VCOs: Differences between Haringey and Enfield VCOs

Activities for VCOs	Haringey %	Enfield %	Total %
Advice	12%	15%	27%
Outreach	12%	6%	18%
Training	11%	4%	14%
Education	7%	5%	12%
Counselling	5%	3%	8%
Employment	4%	2%	6%
Enterprise	1%	1%	2%
Other*	4%	9%	13%

*Other refers to user involvement, consultation, service provision, information provider, support, policy development, and campaigning or project delivery.

These indicate “advice,” “outreach” and “training” were the top three activities carried out by the organisations. In fact, Haringey based organisations were more pronounced in both the “outreach” and “training” activities, whereas Enfield based organisations were more evenly spread across the eight different activities.

In terms of geographical “reach,” the organisations predominantly provided services solely in their own borough, i.e. either Enfield or Haringey (see Table 6.13). A small proportion of the Enfield based sample provided services in the London Borough of Barnet (18%) and a small proportion of the Haringey sample provided services in Enfield, Barnet and Waltham Forest in addition to their own site location (14%). Other boroughs that the organisations provided services for included the LB of Islington, East Herts. and Broxbourne. Some organisations provided services on the telephone to people outside of London or other parts of the UK.

Table 6.13: Geographical Reach of VCOs

Geographical Reach	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
Own Borough	69%	73%	71%
Enfield and Haringey	0%	3%	2%
Enfield and Barnet	0%	18%	8%
Enfield, Barnet and Haringey	10%	0%	5%
Enfield, Barnet and Waltham Forest	0%	3%	2%
Enfield, Barnet, Haringey and Waltham Forest	14%	0%	7%
Own borough + non NLSR area	7%	3%	5%
			100%

The picture is then of VCOs with an essentially local geographical (borough or neighbouring borough) focus, though some organisations with a client focus (such as health or ethnicity) provide services and training over a wider geographical area.

6.4 Section 2: The Community Empowerment Networks (HarCEN and ECEN): Views and Experiences

The entire sample consisted of VCOs that were members of either HarCEN or ECEN, the Community Empowerment Networks (CEN) in the respective boroughs. 39% of the sample was also CEN elected Representatives, i.e. they sat on LSP thematic partnerships/ Boards, the majority of which were ECEN elected representatives (31%), and only 8% of the total sample was HarCEN elected Representatives. In this section the views of the sample on the workings of the CENs are analysed, based on their experience to date starting with the VCOs that were actually CEN Board representatives with questions about their Board role, and how they interpreted this role.

6.4.1 The VCOs that are CEN Board Representatives

87% of those VCOs that were CEN Board Representatives were briefed by the CEN Co-ordinators and the associated training programme: "Effective Representation," about their role as a CEN Representative, with 13% (all located in Enfield) stating they had not been briefed (see Table 6.14). 74% of the organisations that were CEN Representatives stated that they were mandated by their organisation, informing them on how to vote on tabled issues at CEN Meetings. As one respondent stated:

"I am only mandated by my group on election issues – otherwise it is left to my discretion as there is no other voting opportunities offered in advance." **ECEN Representative**

Table 6.14: Roles and Responsibilities of CEN Members and Representatives

CEN Representatives Roles	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
CEN Members	49%	51%	100%
CEN Representatives	17%	60%	39%
Non CEN Representatives	83%	40%	61%
Briefed about their role as a Representative	100%	83%	87%
Not Briefed about their role as a Representative	0%	17%	13%
Mandated by their VCO as a Representative	100%	67%	74%
Not Mandated by their VCO as a Representative	0%	33%	26%
Authority to make Decisions as a Representative	100%	72%	78%
Do Not Feel they have the Authority to make Decisions as a Representative	0%	28%	22%

This suggests that VCOs that were Board Representatives were reasonably well prepared for their roles on the CEN, and had a sense of accountability, though this had not been sufficient to avoid some confusion over the issue of “who representatives speak for” on CEN/ Board debates. 26% believed they were not mandated by their group, all of which, were located in Enfield. Interestingly, a majority (78%) of the CEN Representatives believed they had an independent authority to try to influence decisions in Board level debates, when they were acting as CEN Representatives (i.e. not just acting as Representatives of their own VCO) though the 22% that did not were Enfield based organisations. It would appear from this that HarCEN Representatives were better prepared and more certain of their roles and the authority they had within the Network. In contrast, there appeared to be some confusion among ECEN Representatives concerning their role and level of authority, which may reflect differences in the way the two boroughs set about recruiting CEN Members and how council CEN Members interpret their own roles in the CENs (see Chapter 5). This also suggests that these organisations needed to be clearer about whether an organisation represents the VCS, whether it represents the CEN Membership or whether it represents a constituency of individuals or service users in Board debates and decisions. This is an issue, which was highlighted in the participant observations, and is reinforced by this direct expression of opinion.

It is also worth noting that a larger proportion of non- CEN Board Representatives completed the questionnaire in Haringey, indicating that Haringey VCOs overall (not just the Board members) had a greater understanding of the wider political/ regeneration policy context and a better grasp of the agenda. There was also a small number of VCOs that were non CEN Representatives that actually thought they had the authority to make decisions. For example, some Haringey CEN Member VCOs also felt that although they were not CEN Representatives, they were indeed mandated by their organisation should they have to vote on an issue as a Member of the CEN.

In sum, it appears that VCO Board representatives could be better briefed as to their role in Enfield. Most believed their mandate to vote on key issues, derives from their organisation and was not discretionary. Most also saw themselves as part of a decision making body, though there was more variety (and possible confusion) among the Enfield VCOs as to their role and influence on the CEN.

6.4.2 Views on the Working of the CEN Working

It would appear that the majority of VCOs in the sample saw themselves as having benefited from involvement in the activities and services provided by the CENs, first and foremost by providing networking opportunities (69%) and secondly by receiving training from the CENs (61%), (see Table 6.15). However, slightly more Enfield VCOs had taken up the opportunity of training courses provided by ECEN (70% of the Enfield sample compared to 52% of the Haringey sample). Half of the sample (51%) felt they now had a better understanding of how they could influence local decisions and to a lesser extent service delivery (46%) via CEN participation. Fewer VCOs felt that they had been able to access resources to make their organisations more effective (39%) or to support local activity (36%) as a result of the setting up of the CENs and their participation in it. Those that felt they had been able to access resources to support local activity came almost exclusively from Enfield VCOs (43%). Enfield VCOs were also more inclined to acknowledge that ECEN had enabled them to participate in local partnerships (47% of Enfield sample). Perhaps this more positive view of ECEN VCOs regarding influence and participation can be explained by ECEN's longer duration of operation, and because of this, greater likelihood for these organisations to be engaged in delivery and thus able to access resources as service delivers.

Table 6.15: Benefits from Involvement in Activities and Services Provided by the CENs

Benefits of the CENs	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
Our Members have received Training	52%	70%	61%
We have a better understanding of how we can influence Service Delivery	48%	43%	46%
We have a better understanding of how we can influence Local Decisions	48%	53%	51%
We Have been able to access resources to make our organisation more effective	34%	43%	39%
We Have been able to access resources to support local activity	28%	43%	36%
We have been able to participate in local partnerships	28%	47%	37%
It has provided networking opportunities	66%	73%	69%
We have received NRF/CEF funds for projects	28%	27%	27%
Other	3%	3%	4%
We would like to see other services provided by the CEN	59%	30%	44%

The views of the organisations on the effectiveness and benefits/ drawbacks of involvement with the CENs did vary between the boroughs. For example, the culture and dynamics of VCOs in Haringey and their experiences of regeneration in the past meant VCOs in Haringey had much higher expectations, and were consequently far more critical of achievements, contributing to them wanting to see HarCEN provide much more than it did at the time of the survey. For example, Haringey VCOs wanted HarCEN to provide a better communication strategy, which would give clarity on how HarCEN works, how it was run and how VCOs could get systematically involved. More opportunity for networking alongside the provision of community resources, such as IT support and more training was welcomed in Haringey. Members wanted work to take place with “second tier” organisations, to facilitate them to work more broadly with smaller grassroots groups. HarCEN members specifically wanted help and advice in arranging meetings with local VCOs currently outside HarCEN, to create and enhance networking opportunities, that would assist VCOs chances of survival, and they also wanted HarCEN to facilitate joint funding applications for better chances of success. In this respect it is worth recalling the relative “failure” of the outreach process in Haringey (see Chapter 5). It is felt by some members that the networking opportunities should include sessions on what services the member VCOs provide, so as to mutually educate member organisations about each other's work.

It is also suggested in some responses that HarCEN should promote partnership by helping to set up a consortium for the provision of services and premises for the smaller organisations that were members of HarCEN. Up to date funding information was also a key issue that members wanted HarCEN to provide, perhaps acting as a support link or active resource for identifying funding sources and opportunities and assisting with the securing of such funding to member organisations. It was also suggested that HarCEN should consider running "meet the funders workshops." Members wanted HarCEN to look at bringing in external funders rather than just the "usual" local funders such as the LBH. Perhaps most importantly, some HarCEN members wanted HarCEN to adopt more of a lobbying and advocating role, as it was felt that HAVCO had the upper hand, being perceived by many as more together and influential. In sum, Haringey respondents have quite a lengthy "wish-list" of extra functions, services and support that HarCEN could provide. It may be that this is an unrealistic "wish- list," and that current (or future) inability to meet it will hinder HarCEN's credibility with the VCS.

In contrast, Enfield VCOs felt on the whole that ECEN provided a fairly comprehensive service, with only 15% of Enfield based VCOs wanting ECEN to provide other services. Those that did, wanted to see mentorship for the turnover of committee members, help in obtaining premises and access to grant funding, IT support, and greater knowledge of what ECEN members do and how members can support each other through partnership, echoing the same concerns expressed more forcefully and widely in Haringey. Members also wanted ECEN to plan meetings to look at the long- term strategic needs/ interests from the voluntary and community sector's perspective. Many members wanted to see an increase in website usage for the minutes of thematic groups, as well as a login facility and more updated items, so as to assist /decrease the current paperwork overload that was felt by Members, (and even more so by representatives) to be burdensome. ECEN Representatives also wanted an administration assistant to be appointed to write the representatives reports from partnership meetings. Greater publicity on what ECEN can provide was also felt necessary, because it was felt to be unclear at the time of the survey. EVA, as ECEN's "accountable" body was also the subject of some criticism. With ECEN under EVA supervision, one respondent stated: *"It victimises certain VCOs and is a runaway judge, that does not manage conflict well. I question what EVA has actually contributed, they are to blame for the loss of the Community Worker set up to develop smaller VCOs."*

There is no benefit from being involved with ECEN." (ECEN Housing VCO). These suggestions are of a more operational, even bureaucratic nature than in Haringey, suggesting there was a greater consensus in Enfield on the scope of the work of the CEN, and not still a debate about its purposes.

In summary, the majority of CEN Representatives have been briefed and mandated about their roles, but there appeared to be greater confusion among ECEN Representatives concerning their role and the level of authority they possess. A generally positive interpretation was placed on the experience of participation in the CENs by most of the respondents, networking opportunities were seen as the primary benefit of involvement within the CENs for the VCOs, along with training. Haringey VCOs though were much more critical of the services provided and were able to provide an ambitious "wish list" of additional services they would like to see. The emphasis in this was on reinforcing the scope of networking and help with accessing funding, especially for smaller VCOs. Enfield's issues were more practical organisational ones.

6.4.3 Non- Participation in CENs: Insights and Opinions

Many of the VCOs did not want to divulge whether they were aware of any VCOs that had chosen not to be involved in the CENs (75%). Generally, Haringey VCOs were more likely to provide such information and were willing to name the organisations that they were aware of that were not involved in the HarCEN (see Table 6.16). It was revealed that the types of VCOs that were known to be not participating in HarCEN included Refugee and Asylum Seeker groups, such as Cabinda and Somali orientated organisations, as well as those that provided services for the French and Portuguese speaking communities, many of which were identified as being based at the Selby Centre, White Hart Lane, which houses 34 VCOs of BME and refugee origin, including Angolan, Cabinda, Eritrean, Ethiopian, African, Asian, Kurdish, Somalian, Ugandan and Zairian communities. It was felt that such organisations either lack the resources to participate, or are faced with language barrier problems which prevent participation.

Table 6.16: Awareness amongst the VCO Sample of VCOs that are Not Involved with the CENs

Non- Participating VCOs	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
Aware of VCOs that have chosen not to be involved in the CENs	34%	17%	25%
Not Aware of VCOs that have chosen not to be involved in the CENs	66%	83%	75%
Aware of VCOs that have chosen not to be involved in the CENs and name them	24%	7%	15%
Aware of VCOs that have chosen not to be involved in the CENs and do not name them	10%	10%	10%

Arts or play associations and children's groups appear to be high non-participants in HarCEN activities, further supporting the findings of the participant observations. Similarly, in Enfield it was felt that Arts and Children's organisations were non-participating in ECEN activities; two organisations in particular were named. It was felt that these organisations did not participate because they were start up organisations that were not ready for participation in a CEN, largely because their next step was becoming registered charities. This further supports the fact that only 3% of the CEN Member organisations in the sample had been in existence for less than a year. Participation in more formal structures for partnership working such as CENs seems to require a certain degree of experience/ confidence and internal structuring for individual VCOs that comes with being established for a few years.

Consequently, very new VCOs tend to be excluded from CENs, or overlooked, suggesting that CEN Membership should be periodically reviewed so as to include "newcomers." Organisations with a larger proportion of their work not located in Enfield, (not making them eligible for ECEN Membership) were also identified as possible non-participation organisations.

Table 6.17: Important Factors in contributing to VCOs not wanting to be involved in the CENs

Perceptions of Non- Participating VCOs by "Active" VCOs	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
Lack of Knowledge	76%	63%	69%
Perception that Nothing Changes	76%	30%	52%
Poor Experiences of Participation in the Past	66%	33%	49%
Domination of Meetings by certain Individuals or Groups	45%	20%	32%

However, it is suggested by the sample VCOs that the most important factor in contributing to organisations not wanting to be involved in the CENs is lack of knowledge, with 69% of the respondents considering lack of knowledge as the main barrier (see Table 6.17). This is particularly thought true of some of the newer communities. For Haringey VCOs, the perception that nothing changes and poor experiences of participation in the past were also important factors, with 76% of the Haringey sample considering perceptions that “nothing changes” as important in determining an organisation’s participation, and 66% of the Haringey sample also thought that poor experiences of participation in the past was an important factor, as one respondent stated: *“people in Haringey have long memories and feel frustrated”* (HarCEN Founding Member). Another respondent commented that, *“people often have the perception that regeneration initiatives will have a negative impact and make the situation worse”* (HarCEN Refugee and Asylum Seeker VCO).

In contrast, interestingly, the Enfield VCOs almost exclusively thought that the perception that nothing changes and poor experiences in the past of participation were actually unimportant factors hindering VCO involvement with the renewal agenda (70% of the Enfield sample). These barriers therefore may be specific to the history of Haringey. The domination of meetings by certain individuals or groups was considered less of a contributing factor to VCOs non- participation in the CENs, with 68% of the entire sample considering it unimportant or having no real strong view, although, it was once again considered of greater importance to Haringey VCOs (45%) than those in Enfield (20%). These differences may reflect the difference in the structure of the two samples, as well as real differences in the environment for participation in the two boroughs (as discussed in Chapter 5).

Other comments made about the possible reasons for non- participating VCOs, which almost exclusively came from Haringey based VCOs included: meetings being held at inconvenient times, lack of time, VCOs not being at a stage to join, or VCOs having just not tried it. In Haringey the different roles of HarCEN and HAVCO caused confusion regarding participation, which was an anxiety identified in the observation research (Chapter 5). The perception that VCOs services are council services was also thought to be a contributing factor to whether organisations choose to participate, because the line between the statutory and the voluntary sectors has become blurred, causing a

perception that the council is the responsible lead for VCOs service provision. A perception also exists that the council is selective in its welcome for VCO participation, causing some VCOs not to participate. Finally, there was recognition among the VCOs that participation at the strategic level is important, but difficult for smaller VCOs. As three respondents stated:

"The strategic level is important, but VCOs need resources in order to participate, the VCOs that have the resource capacity, the greater their influence."
HarCEN Refugee and Asylum Seeker VCO

"We are a bigger organisation, so we are not as frustrated as some of the smaller groups."
Haringey Community Centre HarCEN Member

"High level things are important, but the strategic level gets compromised because otherwise you are never there for the people you serve at the grassroots" **CEN BME Member**

Although, these responses "explain" non- participation by some VCOs in terms of the opinions of those already actively participating VCOs (speaking "on behalf" of the non involved VCOs as it were) they are based on experience and knowledge of the sector and thus have credibility. The fact that refugee groups, certain ethnic groups, art and children's groups and newer groups are not participating, and the role of negative past experiences (in Haringey) limited resources and the local logistics of meetings are all useful insights.

6.5 Section 3: The Local Strategic Partnership – Relationships between the VCS and Statutory Bodies

6.5.1 Level of Participation

Given the key role of LSPs within local governance arrangements, a focus on the experiences of the VCOs in becoming involved with LSP working (within their respective boroughs) was the third part of the survey. The aim is to test the extent of VCO involvement in, and influence on, LSP strategy, formation and LSP decision making, via the experience of the sample, and to determine how far the CENs have helped progress the agenda of VCO participation in urban regeneration via the mechanism of the LSPs. This is important because it is the context of the LSP that the VCO sector has to interact with and influence players from other sectors, such as the statutory sector and private sector. Therefore, asking the VCO representatives to reflect

on their involvement with the LSPs puts the relationships of the voluntary sector with these other sectors under the spotlight.

The involvement of voluntary sector agencies in LSPs and the development of neighbourhood renewal strategies is vital, as capacity builders, service delivers and representatives of various, often disadvantaged, client groups. There are a number of levels at which the voluntary sector could (and should) be involved in the LSPs. A wide range of voluntary organisations from small, informal self help groups to large local umbrella bodies (for example Councils for Voluntary Service) have a role to play in this process. The guidance rightly highlights the potential capacity building role of umbrella agencies in enabling smaller VCOs to engage with such a process. For this to happen though, it is vital that these umbrella organisations are engaged as equal partners with their public and private sector counterparts and that their role and their constraints are adequately understood.

CENs and to some extent “compacts” are currently seen as a key vehicle for establishing good working relationships between voluntary and statutory bodies. Perhaps more importantly, the question being raised, is how will the sector ensure a real “strategic” influence and not just become a “consulted party”? When the voluntary sector umbrella bodies can inform and advise the VCS on policy, and represent the broad views of the sector in cross-sectoral partnerships, but have no remit to dictate to, to manage, or make commitments on behalf of the organisations, which they support and represent, then the latter outcome is more likely. There can be no single representative for the sector who can make strategic decisions on behalf of the sector, and the same is true of the private sector. Consequently the public sector needs to learn to work with a range of external agencies in order to develop the breadth of relationships required for this kind of partnership working.

Table 6.18: Perceptions of Level of Participation

Involvement	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
Highly Involved	8%	30%	19%
Involved	41%	60%	51%
Not Involved Much	41%	3%	22%
Not Involved At All	10%	7%	8%

Within the Local Strategic Partnerships (ESP and HSP), 51% of the entire sample rated their level of community participation as “involved” and 19% felt “highly involved” with the LSP process (see Table 6.18). In contrast, 22% did “not feel involved much” and just 8% felt “not involved at all” in the process. Enfield VCOs were more prone to rating themselves as “highly involved,” accounting for 30% of the Enfield sample under this category. Those that felt “highly involved” were predominantly CEN Representatives. The sense of involvement in LSP initiatives was more broadly based among Enfield VCOs than for Haringey VCOs, perhaps reflecting the longer history of organised CEN activity in Enfield. However, below is an interesting comment from an Enfield VCO that felt “involved:

“ECEN is a toothless bulldog – it has no bite. The Steering Group and Chair are not democratically elected; the same people are in these posts every year. They cherry pick community participation. The Enfield Racial Equality Council should have been on automatic representative for BME representation”

Those VCOs that felt that they were “not involved much” were either HarCEN Board members or VCOs that had been commissioned to run consultative forums in Haringey, with some of these VCOs stating that:

“In the end, we are not working with or using HarCEN as a participation route, because our informal network of Children and Young Peoples organisations do not wish to get involved in HarCEN because of the controversies over the roles of HarCEN and HAVCO, dominating what they are involved in and what they are actually doing. We join in with new directives through other means”
HarCEN Children’s and Young Peoples VCO

“Our voices are not being heard – HarCEN does not take our views to the HSP. Thus issues raised by members are being ignored by statutory organisations. There is clearly a breakdown of communication. HarCEN are supposed to be the mediators for our voice, but we are not being represented.”
HarCEN BME Health VCO

Less of a surprise to feel “not involved much” were the Greek, Chinese, Asian and Irish Community Centres in Haringey, as these are predominately concerned with service provision rather than strategic level decision- making. One Representative did however state, that he was very instrumental in the setting up of HarCEN, but then took a back seat as things began to develop for his own organisation, and was now in the process of returning to participation in HarCEN based activities and events, suggesting involvement maybe on a “cycle” for many VCOs, particularly those of the smaller nature, with fewer resources to direct continuous participation.

In Haringey, those VCOs that felt “not involved at all” were predominately those from the housing sector or the Arts sector. In Enfield there was less of a pattern for those VCOs that felt “not involved at all,” largely because they were much fewer, which indicates that generally Enfield VCOs were satisfied with their level of involvement with the LSP process. Those Enfield VCOs that felt that they were not involved at all commented:

“We just signed up to ECEN and that is as far as our involvement with them has gone. Mainly because we have not received anything overly beneficial to us and we are not really sure what ECEN can provide for us.” **ECEN Leisure VCO**

The LSPs in the respective boroughs do seem to have generated some sense of active involvement for about two-thirds of the VCOs that have CEN membership, though being a member of the CEN was not necessarily a route to LSP involvement. However, there was some scepticism that involvement with the CEN adds value for VCOs above and beyond LSP involvement.

6.5.2 Elements of Community Participation

What then were the main beneficial outcomes of participation in the LSP process that VCOs expected to see? This question was tested by asking the respondents to rate six expected benefits of participation, which were themselves categorised as concerns with building social capital, improving governance or service delivery. As expected the VCOs rated the “social capital” based elements of community participation, as the most important, with 91% of the respondents considering community participation overcoming alienation and exclusion as important, 88% considering community participation as a people’s right as important, with one respondent stating this should be “people’s choice” rather than “people’s right” because not everyone wishes to participate in such activities. 81% believed also that community participation helps sustainability. Some respondents did however comment that “in theory” or “ideally” community participation should help sustainability, but in “practice” it did “not necessarily succeed” and “commitment” was required.” Those respondents that considered these social capital elements of community participation as unimportant (or having no strong view) came exclusively from Enfield health and housing based VCOs.

However, “governance and service delivery” based elements of community participation appeared to be of equal importance amongst the sample, with 91% of the respondents considering community participation in the LSP makes communities stronger in themselves, 81% seeing community participation as important for maximising service delivery (and to a lesser extent) 73% considered joining up different conditions of development as important. Again, those respondents that considered these governance/ delivery elements of community participation as unimportant came predominantly from the same Enfield health, BME and housing based VCOs. VCOs in Haringey, who recorded the service delivery and governance elements of community participation as unimportant, were from organisations that were engaged with the contractual delivery of services (see Table 6.19).

Table 6.19: Importance of Community Participation Elements to VCOs

Community Participation: What are the Benefits?	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
Overcomes alienation and exclusion (Social Capital)	97%	87%	91%
Makes communities stronger in themselves (Governance)	97%	87%	91%
People's right (Social Capital)	100%	77%	88%
Helps sustainability (Social Capital)	97%	67%	81%
Maximises the effectiveness of services and resources (Service Delivery)	90%	73%	81%
Helps join- up different conditions of development (Governance)	86%	60%	73%

In sum, the VCOs made no real distinction between at least five of the six different rationales for community participation, seeing them all as equally important, showing how much the agenda of participation has moved beyond just social and welfare issues of the sector. Even so it is clear that the VCOs value participation as a route to making themselves “more powerful” (which they feel they deserve to be) as much as for its outcomes. In other words they value the process of participation as much as its product.

6.5.3 Leadership to Support Participation

The VCOs tended to describe the leadership to support community participation in their local area (from the options presented in the questionnaire) primarily as “committed but marginalized leadership” (49%, 30% of which came from Haringey based VCOs). With comments such as the following being made:

“Leadership to support community participation is weak, our issues are not being put across, and instead they are selectively ignored.”
HarCEN BME Health VCO

Table 6.20 Leadership to support Community Participation in the local area

Leadership	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
No Leadership	24%	16%	20%
Token Leadership	7%	20%	14%
Committed but Marginalized Leadership	62%	37%	49%
Committed and Effective Leadership	7%	27%	17%

17% of the sample (almost exclusively comprised of Enfield based VCOs) considered the leadership to support community participation as “committed and effective” (see Table 6.20). However, this view came almost entirely from those who were ECEN Representatives. It was the VCO representatives who were “closest” to positions of responsibility that judged current leadership as most effective. 14% considered the leadership within their borough to support community participation to be “token leadership.” In Haringey “token leadership” was reported by VCOs that had previously stated they felt that they were “not involved at all” and organisations that were new on the agenda to be involved, such as faith or housing based VCOs. In Enfield, those VCOs that considered leadership as “token,” primarily came from housing, health and BME based groups, which felt they were semi- detached from the process in other ways. Finally, 20% of the VCOs in the sample considered there to be no leadership to support community participation at all, 12% of which came from Haringey based VCOs, primarily of BME origin. This could be perhaps because these organisations perceived/ interpreted “leadership” as local authority statutory figures of predominantly white, middle class origin, or that “leadership” to them is primarily the work of the CENs and their accountable body, which had failed to include “charismatic” community leaders in the locality. Or it maybe simply that these BME organisations do not feel that there are such “leadership” figures that currently advocate or endorse community participation in organised initiatives such as the LSP. The overall impression here then is of a rather guarded judgement about how effectively VCOs are being led towards greater participation in the regeneration agenda.

6.5.4 VCOs Roles within the LSPs

When asked to reflect upon actual involvement with the LSP process the most important role within the respective LSPs for the VCOs in the sample was seen as primarily information dissemination (27%) followed by strategic planning (24%) and project management (16%). Funding and budgetary decisions, monitoring, scrutiny and evaluation and policy- making featured to a much lesser extent in the sample (see Table 6.21). 7% of the sample went as far as to state that they considered themselves as having no role in the LSPs, indicating a lack of knowledge concerning the “bigger picture” of how the CENs work fits into the LSPs. The large proportion of VCOs that considered strategic planning as one of their main roles within the LSPs was somewhat of a surprise, given the previous comments made that local VCOs lack the resources to participate at the strategic level. However, many of these organisations were branches of national organisations, in Enfield’s case, or large local VCOs in Haringey’s case and had both access to expertise/resources and an expectation of “being listened to.” Smaller organisations were not able to be specific about their impact on LSP working.

Table 6.21: Important Roles of VCOs in LSPs

VCO Roles in LSPs	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
Information Dissemination	25%	30%	27%
Strategic Planning	27%	24%	24%
Project Management	24%	12%	16%
Funding and Budgetary Decisions	11%	9%	9%
Monitoring, Scrutiny and Evaluation	3%	15%	9%
Policy Making	8%	6%	6%
No Role	1%	3%	7%
Other	1%	1%	2%

There was some evidence of controversy over the role of LSP Representatives and their effectiveness in reporting back, with one respondent commenting that:

“VCOs knowledge of the LSP depends on their link to the Representatives and how they disseminate information. It should not only be about HarCEN and HAVCO, it should be about how they feed and join-up to other organisations as they are accountable to the wider membership. All bodies you sit on should have a reporting back mechanism, so that the “add on” by the voluntary sector is there in statutory sector plans.”
HarCEN Refugee and Asylum Seeker VCO

6.5.5. Balance of Power

In order to assess to what extent the VCOs felt they exercised real influence within the LSP process vis-à-vis other players. Here respondents were asked to rank the level of power they perceived each of the partners of the LSPs to possess, using a scale of 1 –9, where 1 was least powerful and 9 was most powerful. This scale correlates with Burns et al (2004) adaptation of Arnstein's "ladder of participation" (see Figure 6.2)

Figure 6.2: Level of Participation Scale **Source: Burns et al (2004) p60**

Position on Scale	Scale	Explanation
Ownership	9	Communities have ownership of all assets – there are no conditions which have to be met
Control	8	Communities have control over all activities, but only within conditions laid out in contractual arrangements
Substantial Delegation	7	Partner organisations give substantial control over decision making to communities
Limited Delegation	6	Partner organisations give limited control over decision making to communities
Advisory Input	5	Communities have a formal advisory role
Genuine Consultation	4	Communities are properly and genuinely consulted
High Quality Information	3	Communities are given high quality information
Consultation controlled by Decision Makers	2	Communities are consulted, but only on options which have been carefully constructed by those with the power
Lip Service Only	1	Despite the rhetoric, participation amounts to nothing

The local authority (64%) and funding bodies such as GOL (51%) were still perceived as the most powerful partners around the LSP table. Thus suggesting it is still felt by VCOs that the "ownership," "control" or "substantial delegation" rests with such bodies. For example, one respondent stated:

"We are at their mercy, they are a small God, adopting a top-down approach regardless of the needs of the community. I don't want to be in a situation where I still have to lick peoples feet"
HarCEN BME Health VCO

The Accountable Body also appears to the VCOs to be one of the most powerful partners (39% across the total sample). However, more Haringey VCOs (of predominantly BME origin/ HarCEN Representatives) than Enfield VCOs perceived the Accountable body for the CEN as one of the most powerful partners, reflecting the difference in choice of Accountable bodies. In this respect it is worth recalling that HarCEN has a statutory body, the Scarman Trust as their "accountable body," which

has come under substantial criticism from HarCEN Members for not releasing funds. One respondent commented that:

"The Scarmon Trust is disappointed with some of the reactions from the community groups and rightly so, money can only be released if the requirements/ benchmarks are reached."
HarCEN Training VCO

Another commented that:

"HarCEN will never be free of the Scarman Trust as their accountable body, their management committee are not strong enough - they do not know what they are doing."
Research Consultant

Whilst others were more positive of the Scarman Trust's contribution, stating:

"We are now in a situation where we have to work in partnership or we are just waiting for the plug to be pulled, as the council withdraws our core funding. The partnership – HSP is still shaky – suspicion still exists between the different sectors. However, the Scarman Trust has helped grassroots organisations to fill out Community Chest forms etc. Big funders don't give that sort of support and organisations should not forget it."
HarCEN BME Health VCO

In contrast, ECEN has Enfield Voluntary Action, a Council for Voluntary Services, as their Accountable body which is a voluntary sector organisation itself, perhaps explaining its "moderate" level of power perceived by ECEN Members responding to the survey.

Perhaps surprisingly, across the total sample of VCOs, the voluntary sector itself was perceived as moderately powerful, with 46% scoring their own power as 4-6 and a further 29% (almost exclusively from the CEN Representative VCOs) considering the sector as one of the most powerful partners at the partnership table, scoring their power as 7-9. This perhaps suggests that at least some of the VCOs feel that "genuine consultation" with the voluntary sector is now taking place and that they are given an "advisory input" into the decision making process and that a certain level of "delegation" of responsibilities to the voluntary sector, particularly around the delivery of services is being recognised.

This rather strong self- image of the VCO sector as (at least potentially) a "powerful" player in a participation based regeneration process fits in with the earlier finding (see

Section 6.5.2) that the VCOs value the process for itself, rather than for the measurable outcomes it produces. It is political payoff (being part of the process) that counts as much as anything else. In particular, the genuine sense of being part of a collective and collaborative VCO sector, which has a legitimate role in the local policy process is a valued aspect of the whole process. The act of participating is creating a collective self-conscious sector identity that did not exist before, i.e. VCOs no longer see themselves as individuals pitting against each other, but have identified themselves as part of a group by taking part in the process, and are gaining confidence, knowledge and social capital as a result.

Interestingly, the sample perceived the business sector as the least powerful, with 41% scoring its power as 1-3 and just a mere 8% considering them the most powerful. Thus suggesting that the business sector's level of power is perhaps "controlled by the decision makers" and that the business sector only receives "high quality information" when it is present at the partnership table or even that they are not represented at all. In fact, the sample actually sees the voluntary sector to have a greater level of power than the business sector on the LSPs. This would certainly not have been the case in previous periods of regeneration in the early 1980s and early 1990, when business led regeneration initiatives were more dominant. This response is quite interesting, because whilst they maybe right that the private sector is not highly influential within the LSP, of course it has a highly important role in shaping the wider local economic development agenda (not necessarily through formal governance arrangements).

The Community Representatives that sit on the LSPs were also considered to have a moderate level of power, with 46% scoring their power as 4-6. This response mainly came from VCOs that are ECEN and HarCEN Representatives. However, in contrast to the voluntary sector scores, much less of the VCO sample considered these representatives to be very powerful, having the second highest score for the least powerful partner, suggesting the voluntary sector collectively is perceived stronger than the representatives that were picked from it. These views predominantly came from BME and Children and Young Peoples VCOs in Haringey and in some cases HarCEN Representative themselves. One respondent commented that:

"The Representatives have no independence from the council. They are effectively "puppets" of the council when they sit at the HSP meetings. It is our community group, not theirs, the

representatives should be lobbying and campaigning for us, not just pushing their own agendas, but they are simply not doing anything for us.”
HarCEN BME Health VCO

Working collectively with all partners is perceived to generate a similar moderate level of power, as that recorded individually for the voluntary sector and the Community Representatives (see Table 6.22). The total sample had “mixed” perceptions of the councillors’ level of power; interestingly the Enfield VCOs, particularly those that were Representatives made the distinction that Conservative Councillors were extremely powerful, but Labour councillors had little if any power.

Table 6.22: The Perceived Balance of Power among the partners of the LSPs on a Scale of 1-9 for the Total Sample of VCOs

Partners	Least Powerful 1-3	Moderate Power 4-6	Most Powerful 7-9
Local Authority	7%	10%	64%
Funders (e.g. GOL)	10%	20%	51%
Accountable Body	13%	29%	39%
Councillors	22%	22%	37%
Voluntary Sector	19%	46%	29%
Community Representatives	24%	46%	12%
Business Sector	41%	32%	8%
All Partners	7%	47%	24%
Non Responses	19%		

6.5.6 Successes, Significant Issues and Effectiveness of Strategies within the LSPs

The VCO sample has “mixed” feelings as to whether the LSPs have been successful. It would appear that the major success of the respective LSPs has been to build better relationships with the voluntary sector, with 49% of the respondents agreeing with this statement, and to a lesser extent building better relationships with community organisations (43%). This is perhaps to be expected given the lack of distinction that was made by the sample regarding the nature of “voluntary” and “community” sectors, with respondents largely “seeing them as the same.” It would appear that the respondents judge the LSPs to have been most unsuccessful in targeting local needs effectively, followed by building better relationship with community groups (51% and

49% respectively) believing that the LSP had been either unsuccessful at doing this, or had no strong view regarding this matter (see Table 6.23).

Table 6.23: Successes and Failures of the LSPs

LSPs Have been Successful in:	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
Targeting local needs more effectively	31%	53%	41%
Building better relationships with community organisations	34%	50%	43%
Building better relationships with the voluntary sector	52%	47%	49%
LSPs Un-successful in:			
Targeting local needs more effectively	69%	30%	51%
Building better relationships with community organisations	65%	23%	49%
Building better relationships with the voluntary sector	48%	36%	43%
Non response rate	0%	17%	8%

Haringey VCOs, were again more critical when it came to VCOs views on whether what was being achieved by the Haringey Strategic Partnership was acceptable to them as partners in the process. Those Haringey VCOs reporting the Haringey Strategic Partnership’s lack of success predominantly came from health, BME, Housing, and Children and young people’s VCOs pinpointing the type of group that was not convinced of the value of the LSP’s work. In contrast, the Enfield VCOs were more inclined to respond positively regarding the Enfield Strategic Partnership’s achievements and successes, with these responses predominantly coming from ECEN Representatives. However, the non- respondents to this item exclusively came from Enfield based VCOs (8% of the total sample) that were not ECEN Representatives. This may reflect the differences in the structure of the two samples, as well as real differences in the environment for participation in the two boroughs.

Within the LSPs (both Haringey and Enfield) the perceived dominance of the local authority (58%) and lack of commitment from some of the sectors (54%) appeared to be the most significant barriers to inhibiting future successful working to the total sample, and to a lesser extent conflicting interests and agendas (41%), (see Table 6.24). For example, respondents commented that:

“Unfortunately, the perceived dominance of the local authority is still a huge problem despite the fact that we went out of our way when we were setting up HarCEN’s structure to avoid this.”
HarCEN Training VCO

"The ability of some of the sectors to know how to work in partnership is a significant problem"

ECEN Representative

Table 6.24: Significant Issues within the LSPs

Different Barriers to Improvement	Haringey Sample	Enfield Sample	Total Sample
Different working styles across the sectors significant	34%	33%	34%
Different working styles across the sectors insignificant	66%	37%	51%
Conflicting interests and agendas significant	48%	33%	41%
Conflicting interests and agendas insignificant	52%	37%	44%
Perceived dominance of the local authority significant	66%	47%	58%
Perceived dominance of the local authority insignificant	34%	23%	27%
Lack of co-operation between different community groups significance	48%	23%	36%
Lack of co-operation between different community groups insignificance	52%	47%	49%
Lack of commitment from some of the sectors significant	55%	53%	54%
Lack of commitment from some of the sectors insignificant	45%	17%	31%
Other issues of conflict significant	38%	13%	26%
Other issues of conflict insignificant	62%	57%	59%
Non Response rate	0%	30%	15%

However, in Haringey, a higher proportion of VCOs considered a lack of co-operation between different community groups and other issues of conflict as significant issues, indicating a current failure of effective co-operative working, perhaps an indication as to why a working contract between HarCEN and HAVCO had to be devised. Other issues of conflict for Haringey VCOs focussed around the Akronym Consultancy's research proposal in establishing a CEN for Haringey. Amongst the Enfield sample, the lack of commitment from some of the sectors was actually more significant than the perceived dominance of the local authority, supporting the participant observation findings, which revealed the difficulties ECEN Representatives had encountered with statutory bodies commitment towards the "local compact." The non- respondents (15% of the total sample) to this item came exclusively from Enfield VCOs, indicating once more their lack of knowledge or desire to engage in the "bigger picture." With comments such as:

"I really don't know how my organisation could benefit from the LSP in relation to funding, support, human resources etc."

ECEN Representative

6.6 Summary: Experiences of Working with the CENs and LSPs

In sum, much of the localised data obtained from HarCEN and ECEN Members corresponds with the views of CENs nationally recorded in the National Audit Office (NAO) (2004) Report entitled "Getting Citizens Involved: Community Participation in Neighbourhood Renewal." CENs have so far had a limited influence over local decision-making and only limited success in influencing the decisions of public service providers (see Table 6.25). CEN Members currently are not very satisfied with their influence on the LSPs, with members of CENs believing their representatives have too little influence. It is felt that CENs should promote their roles more clearly to local partners and the community and make their processes more transparent. Holding public events in deprived neighbourhoods clearly raised community involvement and funding the voluntary sector built the confidence of community groups. However, community and public sector members of the LSPs still have to manage tensions over trust and power. Thus it was felt that CENs could do more to enhance their influence on the LSPs.

Table 6.25: LSP Statements for total sample

	Disagree	No Strong View	Agree
CEN reflects the views of the community	32%	31%	37%
CEN has so far had a limited influence over local decision making	22%	27%	51%
CEN should promote its role more clearly to local partners and the community	12%	15%	73%
CEN is having some success in influencing the decisions of public service providers	17%	34%	49%
Timing problems compromised the CEN's credibility and damaged their trust in the Local Strategic Partnership	30%	41%	29%
CEN has too little influence on the main boards of the Local Strategic Partnership	34%	27%	39%
Holding public events in deprived neighbourhoods raises community involvement	8%	19%	73%
CEN members are not satisfied with their influence on the Local Strategic Partnership	17%	34%	49%
CEN should make its processes more transparent (e.g. decisions on rejected grant applications and how representatives are chosen)	32%	17%	51%
Community and public sector members of the Local Strategic Partnership have to manage tensions over trust and power	10%	39%	51%
Members of the CEN think their representatives have too little influence on the Local Strategic Partnership	8%	44%	47%
Funding the voluntary sector builds the confidence of community groups	12%	14%	74%
CEN can do more to enhance its influence on the Local Strategic Partnership	7%	20%	73%

The results presented here do however show that VCOs themselves are strongly committed to the participation agenda and value being part of the process, though they were not unaware of limits on their own influence, and where the power still lies. The larger VCOs felt they had some influence, the smaller ones, or those who had not grasped their potential role, do not. All VCOs felt they should be involved, and value the opportunities for networking and building up their own expertise implicitly in the process at both CEN and LSP levels. There is also some evidence to suggest that the BME community remains largely outside of this process, or among the least convinced about the value of the process.

The sample however differs from the findings of the NAO (2004) Report on several issues. There is some debate as to whether the CENs actually reflect the views of the community and whether the CENs have too little influence on the main boards of the LSPs. It is worth making the point here of the evident geographical difference between Haringey and Enfield, reflecting local contextual factors. For Haringey, timing problems regarding the setting up of HarCEN appeared to have compromised the CENs credibility and damaged their trust in the LSP. It was one of the last CENs to be established because of the absence of a local authority recognised CVS in the area to run and facilitate the process, and the eventual setting up of HarCEN alongside HAVCO left scope for confusion of roles.

This survey confirmed that VCO respondents, valued being involved in a participation based regeneration process – indeed they saw it as their right, and beneficial in itself (i.e. as a valuable process). They increasingly saw themselves as significant players, though with scope for strengthening their role. They were perhaps less concerned with establishing benefits from participation in terms of measured outputs – for them the process not the product was what counted. At the same time the survey showed that participation remains incomplete in relation to sector, size and age of the VCO sector and that efforts to broaden participation and increase the effectiveness of participation must constantly be addressed. The focus on the LSP experience in the latter part of the survey usefully showed how this level of participation is building up social capital (confidence and networking capabilities) in the VCS. In the next chapter, the experience of some key VCO players will be examined in more detail, taking us deeper into the issues.

CHAPTER 7

EMBEDDED INFLUENCE? REFLECTIONS ON AN EVOLVING PARTICIPATION PROCESS

7. RATIONALE FOR CHAPTER

The aim of this chapter is firstly to highlight some findings that have arisen out of the participant observation and questionnaire survey, or out of the ongoing policy debates. Secondly, it is to provide a deeper understanding of the idea that the participation agenda is part of an ongoing and evolutionary process, developing as different partners establish how it works for them and come to appreciate its possibilities and constraints.

7.1 Introduction

Central to assessing the main questions of this thesis research is the need to develop a deeper understanding of the experience of leading players from the VCO sector concerning their involvement with the community participation agenda, especially the work of the CENs and associated structures. It is the VCOs experiences, judgements and opinions that will comprise the evidence on which provisional conclusions can be based about to what extent the new regime of regeneration policy has truly embedded the VCO sector in policy making and delivery. To this end, a focussed yet representative interview programme with VCO key informants was designed, including representatives from the two boroughs to allow for a comparative element, and to explore the role of local factors in shaping outcomes, which previous chapters have identified as important.

7.2 Design of Interview Process

This section involves a discussion on the choice of organisations and the numbers interviewed at this stage of the research process.

The interviewees were selected purposefully and targeted with the aim to achieve: representation of the two boroughs (Enfield and Haringey), representation across the sectors of the VCOs, and representation of national and local organisations. The VCOs chosen were known to be active, experienced and involved and reflective organisations and the individuals chosen within the organisations were selected or recommended for

knowledge, and experience, giving them the status of "key informants" as much as VCO representatives. The aim was to establish not just a "sample," but VCOs that were likely to drive the process forward. So the "shared and reflective" experience of the process so far, was more important than "breadth."

The target group for this stage of the research process were experienced VCOs and influential individuals. A comprehensive review of key players was undertaken in order to provide a good range of interviews drawing in part on the evidence of the participant observations and the survey responses. Selection of interviewees began by devising a list of "ideal top 10 organisations to interview" in both Enfield and Haringey. This list was accompanied with a further 10 reserves which included recommendations made by interviewees. From this list of 20 VCOs in Haringey and 20 Enfield VCOs there were in fact a total of 20 interviews achieved and a total of 10 non- responses in each of the case study localities.

The interviewees were selected to meet a number of criteria:

- Experienced in the VCO sector: senior positions held with the majority of respondents having worked in the voluntary sector for at least 10 to 20 years.
- Involved in the co-operation agenda
- Experience with statutory bodies
- Experienced in the working of CEN systems: having been involved in the process since the beginning
- Thoughtful and keen to reflect on the process, therefore as a researcher I was taken seriously and they were keen to develop a dialogue and to share experience.
- Willing to share views and exchange dialogue
- Not "over committed" to its success, so free from "spin."

A total of 20 interviews were conducted, 10 in Enfield and 10 in Haringey (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2). Interviews were 1-2 hours in length (with 37 hours of interviews in total), which took place during July- March 2007 and were all fully transcribed. The results of these interviews constitute the "raw material" of this chapter and on which findings will be based and conclusions, drawn under a series of question driven themes. The material is characterised by consistency around the same key themes, systematic

contrasts between the boroughs, sector and type of organisation, useful exemplary material, interesting details of experience and subtleties of judgement.

7.2.1 Design of the instrument

An interview schedule was devised in July 2006, which consisted of six topic areas to be discussed with the participants, building upon results of earlier previous data collection (see Figure 7.1). The topic areas derive from the previous research phases, the theoretical literature and my emerging understanding of key policy issues. They are the “questions” that drive this chapter. First of all this began with discussions about how power and influence were exercised within the CEN and LSP, in order to get respondents views on the extent to which VCO sector organisations had been able to exercise real influence within the new structures, especially the CEN structure. Specific examples of successful and less successful engagement in policy making were sought, and insight into the constraints on VCO influence of where power “really” resides. The extent to which the new regime represents a real change in the “balance of power and influence” at local level in favour of the VCO sector in social/ regeneration policy making was the issue here. This led to a discussion around how adequately prepared VCO representatives were to participate in discussion and decision making about neighbourhood regeneration in forums like the CEN and LSP and whether the lack of experience, competence, management skills and capacity were barriers to effective influence and if so, how these could be overcome. The breadth of VCO participation in the process was also discussed here, to determine if VCO representatives were aware of “excluded” parties. I then went on to talk with respondents about how the (Haringey/Enfield) CEN had developed over the period since it was first set up, and the extent to which it had established a secure role for itself in delivering the neighbourhood regeneration agenda in the Borough. The importance of this theme was to see the new agenda as not merely a structure, but as a process driven by active participants. We then went on to discuss key issues facing the voluntary sector and the CEN.

Table 7.1: Profile of Haringey Interviewees

Interview Number	Organisation (Type/ Size)	Gender of Interviewee	Ethnicity & Disability of Interviewee	Number of Years involved in VCO Sector	Date Interview Conducted	Duration of Interview (Hours)	Number of Transcription Pages
	Profile of Haringey Interviewees						
1	Crime Small	Male	Nigerian	10	03/07/06	2	9
2	Children Medium/ Umbrella	Male	White English	20	04/07/06	2	12
3	BME Medium/ Umbrella	Female	Greek Cypriot	26	05/07/06	2	11
4	Coaching Micro	Male	White English Disability	20	10/07/06	2	16
5	Crime/ BME Small	Female	Nigerian	5	14/07/06	2	12
6	Health Large / Umbrella	Male	Chinese	10	30/08/06	2	13
7	Disability Medium	Female	White English	18	03/11/06	2	10
8	Women Large/ Umbrella	Female	White Irish	26	15/11/06	2	19
9	Arts Micro	Female	White English	5	17/11/06	1.5	8
10	CEN Co-Ordinator	Male	White English	5	19/03/07	1	5
Total						18.5	115

Table 7.2: Profile of Enfield Interviewees							
Interview Number	Organisation (Type/ Size)	Gender of Interviewee	Ethnicity & Disability of Interviewee	Number of Years involved in VCO Sector	Date Interview Conducted	Duration of Interview (Hours)	Number of Transcription Pages
Profile of Enfield Interviewees							
1	BME Large	Female	Greek Cypriot	25	18/08/06	2	10
2	Elderly Large/ Umbrella	Male	White English	25	06/09/06	2	12
3	BME Small	Female	Asian	10	02/10/06	1.5	7
4	Elderly Medium	Male	White English	10	05/10/06	1.5	8
5	Disability Medium	Female	Black Afra Caribbean	10	06/10/06	2	12
6	Environment Small	Female	White English	10	12/10/06	2	12
7	Children & Young People Large	Female	White English	10	18/10/06	2	10
8	BME Small	Female	Bangladeshi	15	20/10/06	1.5	8
9	Disability Large/ Umbrella	Female	White English Disability	25	15/11/06	2	17
10	Health Large/ Umbrella	Female	White English	25	17/11/06	2	10
Total						18.5	106

In the final third of the interviews the political subculture was explored. The previous observational and questionnaire material had already suggested that in any evaluation of community driven regeneration agenda, it is important to recognise that local circumstances are relevant, because the way in which agendas are developed and implemented varies between different local areas. So I felt it important to talk about what could be called the "local political culture" of Haringey/Enfield" and how this may influence the way that VCOs had become involved in regeneration locally. The interview ended on the wider agenda for the voluntary sector, which largely concentrated on governance related issues and any final comments the participants wished to add. The focus on "governance" here and elsewhere allowed me to explore certain theoretical points concerning the role of the VCO sector in emerging forums of local democracy.

Figure 7.1: Interview Schedule: Questions and Prompts

<p>1. Exercise of Power and Influence within CEN and LSP</p> <p>(a) To what extent have voluntary organisations been able to influence the regeneration agenda e.g. of CENs?</p> <p>(b) Can you give examples/ evidence where the voluntary sector has been able to exercise their influence to fix/ alter or progress the agenda to get their own way?</p> <p>(c) Can you give a contrary example, where the voluntary sector was ignored or prevented from exerting an influence?</p> <p>(d) If it is not the voluntary sector that is driving the process (having the influence), then who? <u>LSP</u></p> <p>(e) How would you describe, what goes on "round the LSP Table" when agendas/ priorities are set and (invited) community groups are more "actively" involved?</p> <p>In your opinion, does the CEN have enough or too little influence on the main boards of the LSP?</p> <p>(LSP Reps Only)</p>
<p>2. Capabilities and Competencies of Community Representatives and the Leadership to Support Community Participation</p> <p>(a) Do voluntary and community groups possess the capacity/capability to participate effectively in(possessing adequate training and qualities)?</p> <p>(b) How do the capabilities of community representatives contribute/affect their level of power/influence in the decision making process?</p> <p>In terms of leadership within the participation process:</p> <p>(c) Who are the leaders of the voluntary sector?</p> <p>(d) In your opinion, how effective/adequate are the community representative's leadership qualities in the decision making process?</p> <p>(e) Are there other types of community leaders (charismatic figures) operating outside of the CEN and why do they remain outside the formal process?</p> <p>(f) Does the process itself lack effectiveness because these influential community figures remain outside it?</p>

3. Evolution of the CEN

- (a) What are your views on the CEN's structure in Haringey/ Enfield and the way in which it is bedding down?
- (b) Is the CEN now an effective decision making body?
- (c) Has the CEN improved in terms of its structure etc. over the time you have been involved? How have your views on the CEN changed over time?

4. Key Issues facing the Sector and the CEN at the Moment

- (a) What are the key issues facing the sector and the CEN at the moment?
- (b) How are the voluntary groups new roles in service delivery developing?
- (c) What are the dangers/ fears of participating in structures such as CENs?
- (d) Are these justified concerns?
- (e) What are the main remaining barriers/blockages to more effective working?

5. "Political Subculture"

- (a) Is it fair then to describe the political culture in: Enfield/ Haringey in which the process is situated as
"Enfield as institutionalised, top- down, striving to develop consensus but remaining bureaucratic in nature, Conservative led
Haringey as somewhat "chaotic," where confrontation is seen as healthy, even if it is antagonistic in nature with an evident East - West split, Labour led."
- (b) How would you characterise/ describe local politics in Enfield/ Haringey?
- (c) Is this "culture" distinctive to the borough? Has it influenced the way in which VCO participation has worked in the Borough?
- (d) Is participation best driven (or works best) this way and who is it best for?
- (e) What implications does this "culture" have on how the VCO participation process is managed? - Has it helped or hindered the CEN/ LSP?
- (f) Are local political barriers an important factor in inhibiting participation/ community regeneration)?

6. The Wider Agenda for the voluntary Sector.

- (a) Has the New Labour project's shift in approaches and discourses been a significant turning point for the voluntary sector?
- (b) Do you think the concept of community participation has changed people's thinking about urban regeneration? - How it should be approached, its contents and priorities?

7.2.2 Conduct and Recording of Interviews

All interviews were conducted using the interview schedule as a guide, and 19 of the interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder and were transferred into Digital Wave Player Software, as audio files. These audio files were then listened to and dictated verbatim using Dragon Naturally Speaking Software. One respondent refused consent for the interview to be recorded, because of language difficulties. In this case copious notes were taken and written up shortly after the event.

The material from the interviews "gets behind " the information collected from the observational data and questionnaire programme (which was presented previously) and adds new insights based on the "deep experience" of respondents.

It will be recalled that the questionnaire programme gave a rather "positive" view of how VCOs saw the community empowerment process, in that they thought that VCO involvement was justified and they valued the process itself, almost irrespective of outcomes. That was a reasonable interpretation of that data. But the interviews allow a more nuanced interpretation, identifying the bases for positive judgements as well as some VCO reservations about the process. Ambiguities in viewpoints, based on experience are apparent, as well as a sense of a project that is still in evolution as players gain experience, but also became aware of limitations in the structures as currently designed.

7.3 Analysis

The material collected at this stage of the research is written up around the six key topic areas of which 4 are discussed in this chapter:

1. Power and Influence
2. Evolution of the CEN
3. Capabilities and Capacity
4. Service Delivery: Implications of the Shift from Grant Aid to Tendering, Commissioning and Procurement

The contrast between Enfield and Haringey is quite sharp, and justifies looking at two boroughs in the research design. It allows for some useful comparisons, as does the size and type of the VCOs, so where appropriate these distinctions are made in the analysis. The final two topics: "governance" and "local political culture" are discussed in the final chapter (Chapter 8), where summary conclusions under the research questions on these topics will be located, and a more direct connection with the theoretical themes of Chapter 2 are made.

7.4 Power and Influence

This section analyses the extent to which the VCO sector organisations have been able to exercise real influence within the new structures, especially the CEN structure. Specific examples of successful and less successful engagement in policy making are explored, and insight into the constraints on VCO influence of where power “really” resides. The extent to which the new regime represents a real change in the “balance of power and influence” at the local level in favour of the VCO sector in social regeneration policy making is the fundamental issue here.

7.4.1 *Embedded Influence*

There was evidence that the VCO sector welcomed the CEN structure, felt positive about the structure and the participation agenda, and felt it was truly “*embedded*” in the process, and exercised real influence now. This was especially strong in Enfield. The VCOs were very positive on the principle, practice and impact of VCO involvement in social policy/regeneration policy- making and service delivery, and valued the way VCO experience and knowledge was now fed into the policy process, and regeneration initiatives. They felt it enhanced the process and made for better policy.

The VCO representatives were almost unanimously in favour of the formal CEN structure, believing it was about time they were involved and that they deserved to be involved. In fact they welcomed this “new crossroads” that they were at. It was seen as a positive step forward as they felt they had a contribution to make and could shape the agenda for the better. The role of VCOs was now seen as well “*embedded*” in a “true” and “meaningful” partnership role in social/regeneration policy- making and delivery, with respondents recognising the “change” that had taken place. They were “routinely” involved, and now felt in a position of influence (see Box 7.1).

Box 7.1: VCOs Recognising the Change

"It is more than them just needing to involve us, we are actually being asked by the council how do you want to deal with these issues, rather than them dictating. I absolutely feel that we are now on an equal footing. I think the issue years ago, that the voluntary sector never had the influence, is because they never had the resources in the partnership, I don't think that applies anymore." ET1¹⁹

"The fact that we actually have people and representatives attending these meetings where strategic planning is taking place has got to be a huge improvement on what was there before, because there was nothing there before. Before it was very much around individuals getting involved with certain officers, but not in a coordinated way. It changes officers perceptions of what the VCS is about, and by being engaged we can demonstrate that we are not just volunteers, but we are a professional group of people who have got something to offer as part of the partnership." ET2

Participants saw the CEN as a "needed" structure that had helped raise the profile of the VCOs, made their role more widely recognised and moved "participation" beyond "tokenism." It had been useful to embed VCOs into service delivery and allowed them to influence policy priorities at the local level (see Box 7.2). In fact, through their work on the CEN, VCO representatives had been able to gain wider access to policy forums, with the CEN seen by many as a "springboard," to bigger and better things, because by being CEN representatives the statutory sector had got to know these individuals and what they could bring to the meetings; as a consequence they were invited to sit on other policy boards.

A main conclusion must be that the setting up of the CENs and with it the formal incorporation of the VCO sector in policy making at the local level, was something that was welcomed by the VCO sector. It was a real (and for them overdue) recognition of their value and established them in a position of influence, which they expect to be permanent, and which they expect to develop.

Box 7.2: Embedded Influence

"If I did not have an organisation like the ECEN, frankly, I don't know where we would have been. I believe that a structure, such as the ECEN has been very empowering and enabling for community groups such as ours, as they have given us a voice, where we have representatives, we have staff, we come together in a forum to talk about things that are really important to us and that is the way forward, working together and forming links with statutory agencies." ET5

Interestingly, most respondents did not heavily criticise the principle of VCO involvement or its overall practice. Though some had reservations of various kinds, being "ignored" was not an issue for participants; VCOs were now at least listened to (see Box 7.3).

¹⁹ ET1 to ET10 refers to Enfield Transcript 1-10

Box 7.3: Being ignored is not now an option

"I can't honestly think of an example where we have actually been ignored -they generally will take notice of what we say. I can't honestly say that we have been ignored, where we have actually raised an issue."
ET2

7.4.2 Examples of Successful Influence

When participants got down to citing actual examples of "successful influence" it was clear that "influence" was not (so far) enjoyed to the same extent everywhere across the VCO sector, but was as yet somewhat "selective" and "focussed." It was possible to identify types of VCO and main sectors where influence could best be demonstrated, which can be supported by good examples. "Influence" appeared to be selective and focused around the health, social care, and well-being as well as children and young people (in Haringey) and crime and disorder (in Enfield).

Examples of successful influence included HarCEN playing a role in the VCS consultation/ involvement and development of the young peoples strategy, and VCOs with a "crime and disorder" focus had been fully integrated into the partnership, and actually negotiated funding for the VCS under this theme. "Health and social care" VCOs sustained a "fight for change" over the continuing care framework, which has now been implemented. Physical disabilities VCOs established a users group for disabled people and their carers, which consultations have to now go through, and the VCS was also influential in setting up an "older people's thematic action group," which has its own pot of money. In contrast, participants were able to give examples in areas they felt that had been underdeveloped and where they had too little influence. The community empowerment process does not appear to be reaching BME, refugee and asylum seekers, inter faith groups, residents associations, and those with a focus around mental health as effectively, clearly indicating an uneven development of VCO influence, and reinforcing a point picked up in the observational and survey research.

At the same time, there were frustrations amongst participants around the failure to engage with "individuals," because the focus was still very much on organisations rather than "individuals" (or "associations for individuals"), such as local people/ residents and Residents Associations, which were still not being involved. The smaller community based groups, and organisations, along with the "quieter" individuals genuinely still felt they needed to find a place in the CEN structure to be heard. For

example, the following observation was made at a thematic board: "The VCO representatives were there, but very much on the sidelines really and it's just the way it works really." (HT2). It was still the loudest people that were the ones to be heard. There were concerns as to how some of the "newer" communities were going to become more involved in the CEN/LSP structure, as there was no "real" route in for them at the time of the study. "Access" to the CEN from a disability perspective was interesting, (see section 7.6.3), again showing that the CEN still had some way to go, and reinforcing the impression of "uneven" development of VCOs involvement in some areas.

Explanation for this pattern of "selectivity" appears to stem from these sectors history of involvement, whereby there has been a tradition of statutory collaboration, and a level of VCO professionalism has been achieved. For instance, although the establishment of a formal structure (the CEN and associated thematic groups) is the key to "embedding" VCO influence, it was also appreciated that the quality of individual "leadership" was crucial to the success of VCO involvement (see Box 7.4). As several respondents point out, there can be "professionals" in the VCO sector too. Personalities were clearly important, and it was worrying for some that these leaders could potentially lose their place at forthcoming elections. Consequently, leadership as much as structure is the key to VCO success in driving agendas and priorities and establishing a broad base of participation, as a good structure alone does not guarantee this. In contrast, the sectors/ interests not so successful in creating influence appeared to be those marginalized or excluded because they either did not possess a history of involvement with statutory agencies or they lacked the capacity to participate fully at such a level. In addition they may have lacked outstanding leaders who can influence the agenda of semi-public forums like CEN/LSP, and could be what were described even by sector activists as "hard to reach" e.g. refugee groups.

Box 7.4: Leadership Qualities are Crucial

"I think it's down to the individuals. I think it is about whether the person is vocal enough, and strong enough to actually argue a given point on the behalf of the voluntary sector and where we have those strong representatives, yes, they have definitely made a difference." ET1

"There are a lot of good people across the partnership. These people are professionals, but the voluntary sector is a bit of a mixed bag. There are people that come from the voluntary sector, which are service providers e.g., age concern, who have competent and professional people on board and the service provider groups are fairly focused. I wouldn't say they all have the ability to influence the local strategic partnership. Then you have the "voluntary" voluntary sector e.g., the Enfield over 50s forum, where it depends on just a few people to have an influence in that direction." ET4

"I get the sense that some individuals feel more confident and have an air about them in exerting an influence." ET6

7.4.3 Locus of influence

Influence was not just about the VCOs more or less successful participation in the CENs. The Thematic Action Groups and the LSPs were also seen as important platforms for the VCOs to exert an influence. From the responses, it was apparent that VCO representatives appreciated that their influence varied between the different tiers of the participatory system (e.g. CEN, Thematic Groups and LSP). Influence was being differently exerted at different levels in the structures that had been set up and in different ways in these forums. In fact some felt that the VCS had been able to exert more useful influence at the level of Thematic Action Groups, even where they had not been able to exert any/ little influence at the strategic level, via the CEN or LSP. This was something we also saw in the responses to the survey, from a wider range of respondents.

(a) CEN

The CENs are the vehicle for linking the VCS with LSPs, with the intention of bringing together a range of organisations from large professional voluntary agencies to the smallest community organisations, faith organisations or residents groups, primarily to provide representatives who represent the sector on the Thematic Action Groups and LSP. They are responsible for getting information about the LSPs out to all sections of the VCO community and for providing ways in which people affected by poor service delivery can get more involved in discussing and planning how the services should be changed and help set priorities. They are also responsible for the distribution of small amounts of money for specified purposes. Decisions on the plans for development of the CENs were made by the ECEN Steering Group in Enfield's case and the HarCEN Board in Haringey's case, in consultation with the CEN Membership. To this end,

participants saw the role of the CEN being in influence, discussion, and networking, but not as a decision making body as such in its own right. It was seen rather as an influencing body/ forum (see Box 7.5).

Box 7.5: Influencing Body: the CEN

"I don't think it is a decision making body, as such it is a decision influencing body through representation"
ET9

*"It is altruistic, unselfish and philanthropic, it is looking out for the best of the community. Other sectors may see it as traits of an ineffective body, but we are talking about the ethos of the voluntary sector here, and the ECEN epitomise that."*ET3

The evidence suggests that the VCOs saw the CENs as important platforms where they could shape the participation agenda via discussion, whilst gaining confidence and credibility through participation, and multiply their individual effectiveness via networking with other VCO players and statutory bodies on the CEN. It was where they learnt about how to influence the policy, where they could raise their profile with statutory bodies and make alliances with others in the VCO sector.

(b) Thematic Groups

The Thematic Action Groups are themed partnerships that focus on specific areas and influence the Local Strategic Partnership, whose members represent the statutory, private and voluntary/ community sectors. Representatives seek the views of the membership and feed these back to the Thematic Partnerships that they were nominated and elected to sit on as CEN representatives by the CEN Membership via the Electoral Reform Service (ERS) process. This feedback is achieved through Members Meetings, themed/ consultative forums, websites and feedback reports (in Enfield). This structure facilitates a process where the VCS directly influences decisions made at the strategic level. The Thematic Action Groups were thus a key level of influence, especially in Enfield where they were functioning well, as the survey revealed. It was at this level where influence seemed to be best exerted when considering the level of policy priorities and content. As we saw in Section 7.4.2 tangible influence on policy can be cited, but with VCO influence varying by theme/sector, i.e. "real" impact was seen in some groups and not others. It was usually in the Thematic Action Groups that these examples of influence were successfully experienced.

For example, in Haringey at the Thematic Partnership Board level, the "Well-being Thematic Partnership Board," and the "Children and Young Peoples Thematic Partnership Board" were the two which respondents nominated as having very strong VCS influence, whilst the other three thematic partnership boards: "Enterprise," "Better Places," and "Safer Stronger Communities" the influence of the VCS was relatively lower, although the "Safer Stronger Communities Thematic Partnership Board" was showing signs of improvement. Similarly, in Enfield, the "Health and Social Care Board," "Crime and Disorder" and the "Better Enfield" Thematic Action Groups appeared to have the strongest tangible VCS influence, whilst some of the other Thematic Action Groups such as the "Community and Economic Development Board" which had separate delivery groups on "Leisure and Culture," "Housing and Environment" and "Skills, Enterprise and Employment" could cite fewer examples of "active" influence. The latter indeed appeared to still be trying to work out what they were, and influence was much less apparent in this group at the time of the study.

(c) LSP: Specific Issues Around LSP Level of Participation

Local Strategic Partnerships are partnerships set up to involve local people and agencies in setting out a vision for local neighbourhood renewal and helping to improve the delivery of local services through better planning, and ensuring that services aimed at the most disadvantaged communities/ wards are effectively delivered. As part of their role they oversee the development and implementation of the Community Strategy for the Borough. LSPs are made up of representatives from the public sector (PCT, Social Services, Police), private sector (local businesses) and the VCS. These representatives/ key decision makers work together to make decisions about what services will be available in the Borough.

As the survey data showed, the VCOs (certainly in Enfield) established a role in the LSP structure, felt they had a "moderate" level of influence there and valued participation in so far as it enabled them to gain information and aided networking. However the experienced VCOs interviewed here concede they had been able to exert little influence via the LSPs at the strategic level though they clearly expected more. As a respondent remarked: "I think the "jam," as it were is around the corner, whereas at the moment it's been a bit "bread and dripping." (ET4). It was however pointed out, that VCOs were at an early stage of influence and that they need to act in co-operation, and

be more “unified” and “authoritative,” in order to overcome this problem and achieve such influence.

An important point was that respondents saw both the LSP and the CEN as capable of further evolution in their roles, and expected influence to eventually spread to the higher tiers. Thus VCOs can be drivers, at one level (the Thematic Groups currently), but not yet at another (the LSPs). At the strategic level, influence was as yet the most they could expect. The influence exerted, again appeared to depend on the individuals concerned and how much they worked together. There was not yet a strong and robust enough relationship between the different organisations, and the representatives, for the representatives to really have an impact when they were speaking about the VCS as a whole. One respondent commented “representatives don't really have the people behind them or the arguments to make to people other than their own personal view” (ET2). Participants could however claim some leadership influence, even if this was opportunistically arrived at. For example, in Haringey a VCO was made the interim Chair of the “Enterprise Partnership Board” after the LBH Chief Executive had left. This indicates that the respondents expected more, and now that the structures were in place opportunities could be taken advantage of.

VCO representatives were yet to be “placed” at the LSP Table in Haringey. The sole VCO at the table at the time of the study was there by “default,” having been “invited” by the other partners rather than being elected. In contrast, Enfield VCO representatives felt that there was a good procedure in place for allocating them to the LSP, which was appreciated by the VCO representatives. It was pointed out that the structures were there for the VCOs to use, but it was conceded that they had had limited influence so far. Consequently, only Enfield participants could cite tangible influence on policy at the strategic level represented by the LSP (see Box 7.6), and then only limited examples.

Box 7.6: VCO Influence at the Strategic Level

"We had a concern over the PCT and the fact that with the deficits that they are experiencing, there didn't seem to be any communication with the local authority around some of the funding for the VCS and the impact that would have on the services being provided for the local community. As a result of that, discussions were held between the two agencies, and they appear to have come to an agreement/protocol for communicating around those sorts of issues -if there are going to be any changes or reductions in funding to the VCS they have agreed a protocol first, of how that should take place." ET2

"We brought home to the ESP board that they needed to consult more appropriately with people in local communities, particularly in areas where they intend to have regeneration and as a result of that there are these four meetings that are being held now, with the local communities, and they have already developed these structures for the local area forums" ET2

"The ESP has ECEN on it. So some individuals from the voluntary sector are working at a higher level than they would have done if ECEN had not existed. How much influence or change they have brought about, I am not sure nor is it clear." ET7

"If we still have our own representatives to put at the strategic level, then I would say we are still forming, and because of that the influence is yet to be seen or felt" HT5²⁰

A diagnosis of VCO weakness at the strategic level was that partners come to the LSP Table with their own assumptions and agendas (as seen in the unspoken, subliminal mapping of individuals around the table). It was also understood that a lot of things were done through discussions before these meetings take place. In order to exert a higher-level influence with more power, VCOs need to be involved with other partners in an earlier stage of discussion rather than waiting until it comes to the partnership board. Consequently, VCOs were missing out on opportunities to really work closely in partnership, because the agenda was "whisked" through quickly (see Box 7.7).

Box 7.7: Behind Closed Doors

"I would say it is not always an even playing field, there may be three ECEN representatives on the ESP, but there may be 25 people there employed by the local authority, which is by no means equal, and you do sometimes get the feeling that they have agreed between them before the meeting what they want the outcomes to be and even if you answer against it you can be a minority or minority opinion." ET7

"Occasionally, you get the feeling that things are being bulldozed through, local authority officers, although they talk about partnership working with the voluntary sector on board tends to stand just a bit like a mantra, because they know they have got to say it. They are not always very good at partnership working, sometimes they think partnership working is "well, we will decide what to do and then we will ask everyone else, what they think, but we will still do what we want in the end." There are still areas where they have got to learn that they have got to bring the service users and service representatives in right at the early stages of development and that is a process I think that ECEN can work towards." ET6

Respondents who sat on the ESP Board state particular difficulties that inhibit more effective VCO participation. For example, not all of the sectors turn up all of the time and if they sent somebody in their place they were often somebody that was not briefed. Consequently, one got changing personnel with varying levels of

²⁰ HT1 to HT10 refers to Haringey Transcript 1-10

understanding. They were also expected to get to grips with a whole different range of issues that may not be their own particular area of expertise or interest, leading one respondent to provide a proposal for the ESP to improve its working (see Box 7.8). These were essentially problems of the VCO sector being under-resourced and inexperienced at this level of participation, which hindered effective participation.

Box 7.8: Improving Strategic Planning in the Future

"We can ask sort of general questions that might challenge things, but I suppose for me, we should be looking much more at ways in which we can be more strategic. There should be a group of officers that as soon as things come out from government departments that should be sitting down and working out who should be involved in discussions to look at ways in which we could put a bid in for funds. I don't think we do enough of that as an ESP board. I don't think that we are planning strategically enough to take advantage of what is out there and what is available." ET2

7.4. 4 Reservations on "Embedded Influence"

Although a positive picture has been painted amongst the respondents regarding the scope for influence being exerted by the VCO sector in these new structures, with a real and detailed influence cited at the "Thematic Group" level, some had reservations of various kinds. Some of these have already been alluded to such as the failure to establish a strategic role/ influence in LSPs, and the exclusion of some groups and interest, whilst other reservations on the "embedded influence" so far of VCOs need to be examined more explicitly. Firstly, there were reservations about whether VCOs were truly driving the process. Many identify the "Old Guard" (local authority, council, statutory agencies) as the "true" drivers in charge at key levels, via their targets, and resources notwithstanding their obligations to consult (see Box 7.9).

Box 7.9: Drivers of the Process

"They are writing the agenda, they are not just calling the shots, they are saying what the shots are and telling us what the options are and which ones they have chosen." HT8

"The government, bring out lots of different initiatives and the council is having to follow the government line. The Local Compact, Local Area Agreements etc are all government driven and then the council has to follow along and then the voluntary sector has to fit in to something that has already been worked out, it is predetermined for the voluntary sector, so we work the best we can. These things should be in our favour, but this doesn't mean they necessarily will be, because the agenda at the end of the day wasn't ours to start with. We weren't involved in the initial agenda. All those factors make us reactive, not proactive." HT4

Secondly, there was a fear that CEN structures with their rule based systems, need for democratic accountability and their target driven value for money approach would put some VCO activity at risk of being "crowding out" by the new more bureaucratic system

for participation. Thus CEN structures were seen by some as not so much as “enabling” structures, but also (even at the same time) “stifling” and “confining structures” of VCO initiative and priorities, and an “over bureaucratisation” of the process for active individuals or organisations, particularly those with strong priorities. Some respondents saw some influence coming from outside (as well as via) new CEN structures. It must be stressed that these were viewpoints expressed by some of the older well-established and focussed umbrella organisations, from respondents that had been involved with the VCO sector, and had the experience of VCO involvement with local authorities and statutory bodies for a long time, predating CEN and the new VCO co-operation agenda. They were aware of something that had been “lost” by the addition of new structures, as well as something gained.

These VCOs were in fact used to discussions on policy content and priorities even before the advent of the CEN (e.g. in health care policy and service delivery) and so had reservations about the new “inclusive” structures, seeing it as a new “layer of bureaucracy,” that had somewhat complicated old established ways of working, and had over formalised VCO participation in policy making and delivery without adding much value. It added work, not effectiveness, but since the CEN needed them, these experienced individuals saw no choice but to join in. But “joining in” was certainly not an unmixed blessing. So CENs appeared burdensome rather than helpful to some VCOs (see Box 7.10).

Box 7.10: Confining Structures and New Layers of Bureaucracy

“I think the structures are largely a red herring and I think it is the responsibility of organisations to make their own, seek out their main allies and make their own partnerships.” HT8

“In terms of the CEN, I have to say I don't think it makes much difference to us as an organisation. We would be there on that agenda and if we weren't we would be gate crashing. I suppose in terms of the CEN, we saw it as important to be part of it, because we wanted the other groups to have the same sort of input that we do, so in a sense ECEN just means more work for us. I think we contribute a lot more to ECEN than ECEN contributes to us” ET9

“I think that in the area that I work in we do have quite a lot of influence about what is going on, but I'm not sure that it is because of those formal relationships or structures in place. I am not sure that it is actually the CEN that has allowed it to happen” ET10

“X has been funded by the statutory sector for 20 years, it is a long time, and we are in a different position. So I wouldn't see the CEN as having many particular benefits for me as an organisation.” ET10

7.5 Evolution of the CENs

An important theme emerging from the interviews was how respondents saw the structures and practices of participation as in “evolution” not fixed or finished with themselves as partial drivers of this evolution, though also realising that other actors and “external” factors will shape outcomes. This is discussed below, where the different trajectories of evolution in Haringey and Enfield are apparent.

7.5.1 *Continual Evolution*

There were some concerns over the ideology behind the process as well as how it was working in practice locally amongst some of the respondents, especially in Haringey. In this respect Enfield and Haringey demonstrate a contrast, which shows the importance of “local conditions” in determining the success of the participation agenda in both operation and outcomes. The major contrast was that in Enfield the CEN was seen as working well. In many ways Enfield was almost a “model” of how the CEN experiment could be viewed positively. However, in Haringey the CEN had not established the same level of “embedded influence” in the policy community, nor of acceptance with the VCS. For some it had not been a very positive process. Indeed some respondents had reservations on the effectiveness locally, with antagonism and distrust at the fore. Enfield promotes a metaphor of “*virtuous circles*,” whilst Haringey promotes a metaphor of “*vicious circles*,” when describing the evolution of the participation agenda in each borough. What were the reasons for this contrast? It seems that critical judgments were expressed in Haringey by VCOs because of the CEN’s bad start and subsequent distrust that arose. Moreover some initial poor management and organisation within HarCEN led to a loss of credibility, confused roles and rivalries played a part. For these reasons this section predominately focuses on Haringey, to elucidate how local conditions and circumstances can strongly shape the outcome of the participation agenda as it unfolds. Enfield is discussed more briefly and presented as a case of “successful adaptation.”

The aim of this section is to communicate a sense that when we analyse the current VCO participation agenda, we are looking not only at structures and their operation, but also at a process and a “work in progress,” where players are learning how to maximise

their impact. There is a strong sense that the CEN and associated structures are still in evolution. The VCOs are growing into their roles, and they hope they can influence the agenda, but recognise other factors at work. Enfield and Haringey demonstrate this, but in different ways.

7.5.2 Structural Adaptations to Increase Effectiveness in Enfield

In Enfield, there was a fairly small VCS, but the way in which it had been co-ordinated and the way the CEN/LSP had been set up has been very effective, producing a “credible” structure for participation, that was viewed positively by most partners. Respondents clearly had high hopes initially, being *“really excited by the prospects”* and *“adming”* the process, having created alliances and networks. The structure and roles that evolved in Enfield were extremely clear to participants, and it now enjoys the confidence of participants (see Box 7.11).

The structure also “adapted” to become more effective over time and there was the impression of a positive evolution. Enfield VCOs were discovering ways of learning in the new CEN structures (e.g. through mentoring practices). For example, in Enfield, continuity of representatives was an important issue because if a group has been involved for a long period of time, there is experience and a knowledge base there, recognising that it does take a long time to bed into the structures and their ways of working. Consequently, Enfield introduced “handovers,” which was a mechanism by which, when somebody was coming into a new post within the CEN/LSP structure, the older member or outgoing member had a “handover” period with the new representative, so that there was continuity that ensured the new representative was not going into the meetings cold. Themed forums were set up by the VCOs themselves, whereby members participated on a given theme, which allowed the representatives to draw up plans to take forward at the Thematic Action Groups of the LSP. These also tackled representational issues (on the basis of recommendations made by an external consultant) - so that representatives felt more empowered to go along to meetings and felt they were actually representing the VCS. Specific BME representatives have also been located in the CEN structure to address representational issues of ethnic minorities. In order to ensure better effectiveness of the CEN representatives, a support worker was in place for the Health related Boards in Enfield. The support worker pre-

meets with the representatives to ensure the representatives have a united front when they get to the meetings. "Pre meets" also gave the representatives the opportunity to be clear about the content of the paperwork being tabled, and decisions are made about who will talk about certain issues and who's going to say what. VCOs felt this tactic was a really important mechanism for the VCS groups to move things forward.

The VCOs role is now accepted by the local authority and by players like the PCT, especially at "officer level," which is further helped by the "professionalisation" of the VCO sector itself. ECEN was an organisation that reviewed its structures and procedures and "learnt" and "evolved," (one such successful review was observed and reported in Chapter 5). Indeed, it is now about to review again, focussing on its roles and inclusiveness, which is rather typical of the learning culture created and shared by participants, which the respondents were well aware of and approve of.

Box 7.11: Clear CEN Role

"I think if you look across London. It is probably as good as any of the others, and better than some."ET9

"The CVS takes care of the VCS and the CEN empowers community leaders to do what they are supposed to do. The Thematic Action Groups make it clear how different aspects/issues in the community are being addressed and dealt with and the ESP structure, bridges the gap between the statutory agencies on one side and the non-statutory agencies on the other side."ET5

7.5.3 Haringey's Specific Challenges

In contrast, Haringey has suffered from the backlash of a structure imposed from above, a lack of trust and inbuilt tensions, with the result that at the "implementation stage" it has fallen down rather badly. We saw earlier it had a flawed start. In this section we see further that a clumsy managerial approach alienated the people expected to carry it forward, so not surprisingly there was much less evidence of a system in positive evolution in Haringey. Indeed, when Haringey respondents were "looking back" on the process of setting up HarCEN a very different image is formed. Haringey has a history of being cautious as a borough, slow to take things on, slow to innovate, possibly because of challenges that make it difficult to be more direct, such as the social and ethnic makeup of the borough, Haringey has its own "special challenges:" in its disadvantaged groups and its ethnicity. There were so many tensions at the time of the setting up of HarCEN, that it is not surprising that it was slow in defining its role clearly, and those "tensions" never really went away. Instead personal

agendas, individual's expressions of power and individuals belief in themselves in terms of what they could offer seemed more to the fore. Learning to co-operate was not much apparent. (See Box 7.12).

Box 7.12: Specific Challenges of Haringey

Haringey is notoriously defensive and protective of its own. There are still skills in the borough that we haven't got yet around trying to develop common dialog." HT4.

For respondents there were two main issues. Firstly, GOL issued an unrealistic timetable given the state of the VCS in Haringey at the time. The problem voiced in the voluntary sector at the time was, *"if we could have had this money years ago, then why didn't we? Why? What is going on? We are suddenly being told that it is under threat: take it now or you are not going to get it."* (HT4). So the setting up of the infrastructure had to be rushed. Secondly, there was an "over hyped" start initially with this desperate expectation that it would all come together. We saw in the survey section, evidence of somewhat unrealistic expectations about the CEN expressed by VCO representatives. This is thought to stem from Haringey's background of having so many issues that never feel addressed, such as a dictating Council, coupled with a VCS typified by rival organisations that pitted themselves against each other and lacked both a tradition of co-operation and the "cooler" more professional management of some of the Enfield VCOs (see Box 7.13).

Box 7.13: Unrealistic and Over Hyped

"There was this desperate expectation that it would all come together and be all "bells and whistles and lots of flags" and things, which of course it wasn't and isn't. Therefore, there was a kind of letdown feeling. There was a sense of having a council that dictated to you, rather than involved you. There was a sense of voluntary sector organisations, pitting themselves against each other rather than working in collaboration, which damaged trust." HT4.

(a) Bad Start and Distrust

There was awareness amongst the Haringey participants that the participation experience everywhere was not the same, with "local variety" apparent. Haringey participants recognised that in other Boroughs (such as Enfield and Islington) the voluntary sector was much more together and cohesive and there was a much clearer sense of where it was, what it was and what it was doing. The fragmentation and the distrust that exists in Haringey seemed to be rooted in the specific "local circumstances" of Haringey, which involved inserting a new body into an existing arena. HarCEN was a new organisation, as was the new CVS (HAVCO), causing an initial conflict of interest amongst the two organisations. Also more generally the

voluntary sector in Haringey had quite a history of fragmentation and distrust of other VCS groups (see Box 7.14).

Box 7.14: VCO Distrust

"It was quite a shock really for me when I came here to Haringey. There did seem there was some antagonism between the organisations." HT2

The two new organisations, HarCEN and HAVCO were just finding their feet when the participation agenda was launched. Against this backdrop there were internal battles within the local authority, where there were some people in the local authority that would not communicate with HarCEN and others who would not communicate with HAVCO. This made for a very difficult working environment from the outset. The local authority saw HAVCO as the natural body for the voluntary sector, as they had funded it and set it up. Although, HarCEN's funding initially came through GOL, it now comes via the local authority. Some participants argued that HarCEN were manoeuvring to secure their future funding, (they now get it through the Voluntary Sector Corporate Team). It was a very difficult situation for some VCOs because they just wanted to be neutral, the "friendly face" of participation. They did not want the reputation of being part of one particular club, but were caught in the rivalry between HarCEN and HAVCO.

Haringey respondents also put their "bad start" down to the fact that the CEN had been set up originally as a result of a consultants report. Though rational and based on extensive discussion, this report did not apparently capture the full confidence of the Haringey VCO sector. This made it difficult for VCOs and the CEN members to get that initial understanding of the aims and objectives of setting the CEN up (see Box 7.15), perhaps indicating it should have been built on an existing structure, not a new imposed structure. As a result, HarCEN never really established a "secure role" for itself, and failed to establish the broad-based trust essential for its work.

Box 7.15: HarCEN's Bad Start

"When it was time for the consultant to leave he just left things with whoever was around HarCEN at the time and there was no training or preparation to develop this initiative in the first place." HT5.

(b) Poor Organisation and Loss of Credibility

Poor organisation of some early CEN events and procedures undermined confidence and credibility among VCOs in Haringey. A common reaction was "pulling back," or "withdrawal" leading some VCOs irrespective of size to either find "new routes" or suggest "alternative models" to the CEN structure. Many VCOs commented on the

management and running of the CEN, as initially being poor, feeling "bypassed," "isolated," unsupported and "lacking in stimulus" to get involved. The CEN was not seen as collaborative in the way that it worked, leading some to refer to it as an "isolationist organisation," which further increased its vulnerability (see Box 7.16). There was not a "feel good factor" in HarCEN, which led to a lack of participation, with a sense of one-off events, which lacked continuity (see Box 7.17).

Box 7.16: Isolationist Organisation

"It becomes difficult to get involved with something, unless there is a lot of stimulus to get involved. I feel uninvolved because I don't feel there is any effort to get people involved and make them feel good - it feels a bit like a 'slap in the face.'" HT4

Box 7.17: Poor Organisation of Events/ Management undermines HarCEN

"I am not convinced much at all through the CEN, but that is more about the efficiency of the CEN in Haringey than it is necessarily being about whether they are useful. HarCEN is quite a new organisation in Haringey, which I would say is just not very well run, so that limits its influence." HT7

"I have never felt that I could exert any influence through them. I wrote to HarCEN after an event about some ideas that I had, but I never heard from them, I did not get any feedback, and nothing really happened from that. Since then I have been invited to various different events, but quite honestly I am not sure what they are all on about, and it hasn't impacted on the work that I do at all." HT9

"The conference was organised so poorly. There were people that didn't explain themselves properly, there was such vagueness around the whole thing, and it is very difficult when you are working on the ground trying to deliver a service, i.e. 'real' things. So to go along to a networking event where you are talked at by people that are very unclear, and as a consequence of that you are very unclear about what it is all about, and what relevance it has to you as an organisation. It simply does not encourage you to go again." HT9

"It is not at all transparent and I have given up. It is not presenting the VCS in a light that I would want. It is simply not professional enough and puts the VCS in a bad light." HT7

Some Haringey respondents felt that the CEN was just not efficient or professional enough, and lacked transparency in its working, which in turn limited its influence. For example, an experienced member of HarCEN believed that the only way they could find out what was going on was to become a member of the HarCEN Board. On their arrival at the Board their suspicions were indeed confirmed: *"All my initial fears were confirmed. There were no processes and procedures in place. Decisions were made here and there and more often than not individual decisions were made on behalf of the CEN, which totally went against the ethos of what the organisation should stand for. There were operational issues around quality assurance... it became something that you took personal and a challenge. People were not happy." HT5*

(c) Confused Roles and Rivalries

Not only was there an initial lack of clarity in the role of HarCEN, but also there was continuing confusion among the participants over the roles of HarCEN and HAVCO,

leading HarCEN to lose the confidence of much of the local VCS. A respondent points straight to the problem: *"because there is confusion around what each of these bodies do, I tend to get them confused and they both tend to get painted with the same brush."*(HT9). Some VCOs did their best and tried to overcome suspicions about what was going on. However, the lack of knowledge and understanding around the whole process continued; as to why the CEN was formed, who it was for, who the VCOs went to for what and why there were separate organisations. Many Haringey VCOs still saw HarCEN as an "interloper" which hindered the working initially, as they could not see why they were separate organisations, or how they related to one another. In short, they failed to communicate their mission to their intended partners, with predictable results (see Box 7.18)

Box 7.18: Confused Roles

"People couldn't understand why HAVCO and HarCEN were separate really. It was as if - Why doesn't HarCEN sit within HAVCO, which would kind of makes more sense." HT2

"I cannot see that HarCEN would have been needed in Haringey, where HAVCO existed." HT5

This overlap in roles led to the feeling amongst some respondents from larger umbrella bodies that it was almost as if HarCEN were looking to develop its role in inappropriate directions, as it was with similar agencies in different areas that problems were occurring. In some cases people felt that it was like HarCEN was trying to "muscle in" on the action and set themselves up, as the lead organisation, which the Council would then deal with regarding key issues of the Strategic Partnership agenda (see Box 7.19).

Box 7.19: Rivalries In the VCS

"It was like they were trying to take out the second tier organisations, it was like a competition almost." HT2

Some Haringey interviewees were prepared to concede that things "will find their own level" eventually, given the right will and support. In other words, a sense that an evolution might eventually be possible towards effective participation, though it may be a longer and more fraught process than in Enfield. Some thought that the "members meetings" would be the best way to develop the organisation at the time of the study, to boost the constituency to give it some credibility and the ability to cope with its own history, as there was a need for a stronger CEN to really effectively involve the VCS in representation and strategic partnership work. But there was also a fear amongst Haringey respondents that with the Local Area Agreements coming into place, the

Council may prefer/ want to work with HAVCO over HarCEN. Indeed, at the time of writing the future of HarCEN was uncertain. Following a decision by Haringey Strategic Partnership, Haringey Council terminated its relationship with HarCEN as from 22nd January 2007. The decision was made on the basis of:

- 1) HarCEN running a Small Commissioning Programme in August 2006.
- 2) The process of distributing funds to some community organizations.
- 3) HarCEN not being seen as 'Fit for Purpose'.

At present the HarCEN board is winding down its activities, which were funded by the Stronger and Safer Communities fund for 2006/07. Due to financial constraints the HarCEN office closed in March 2007. A decision on the future of HarCEN has not yet been made.

In conclusion, this section clearly indicates the importance to the successful implementation of the community participation agenda of having a good start, a clear role for the CEN (as the overarching consultative body), good communication from the outset, consistent leadership, and competent delivery from the CEN to build up trust and credibility between partners. It also indicates that local factors make a difference to this outcome. Enfield was able to establish a "virtuous circle" of adaptation and learning after an early start and once acceptance by the statutory bodies had been achieved. Haringey was not, and fell into a "vicious circle" of underperformance.

7.6 Capacities of VCO Representation

The current policy agenda has initiated debate as to whether VCOs are in fact "capable" of participating within the decision making sphere, given the nature of the sector. The limited "capacities" of VCOs is now a recognised barrier and the need to be "capacity built" and "trained" a familiar response to the problem. The questionnaire findings (see Chapter 6) showed that VCOs competence was an issue for the VCOs themselves. Here we delve deeper to look at specific kinds of barriers that experienced VCO managers judge to affect VCOs "capacities" to participate and to represent the sector.

This section analyses how adequately prepared VCO representatives are to participate in discussions and decision making about neighbourhood renewal in forums like CENs/ LSPs and whether a lack of experience, competence, management skills and capacity are indeed barriers to effective influence, and if so, how they can be overcome. In this section, the “capacities” of VCOs relates to their ability to exercise influence or power and to possess the necessary skills, understanding and access (to information, knowledge and training) to perform effectively in their “new” position/ function as community representatives within CEN and LSP structures (Urban Capacity Building Network, 2007). To this end, VCOs “capacities” are explored in terms of time, staffing, information, culture and commitment.

There was recognition of considerable variation among the capacities of VCOs to contribute (see Box 7.20), and an appreciation that the capacities of VCOs have a direct impact on their level of influence in the decision-making process. However, it must be stressed that, involvement for many participants was as important as “competence” or any “impact.” As one respondent commented: *“The fact that we are involved is more crucial.” (ET2).*

Box 7.20: Varying Capabilities amongst VCOs

“I think some of the representatives have become a real force for change. Others need special support to be effective.” ET7

“Some representatives are very competent and know exactly what is going on and are very elegant in putting their message across.” HT8

7.6.1 Leadership Capacity

The larger, “Old School” VCOs were more involved in the CEN process, taking on the leading roles, while smaller VCOs were at the front line. The larger VCOs tended to be service providers that had been established for a number of decades, had a chief executive and a sizeable paid staff (20+) and had worked in partnership with the local authority in the past. As we saw in the VCO “profile” section (Chapter 6) these organisations have resources and capacity to be in positions of influence and power in the new regime, clearly have a “voice,” and are potential leaders. They have the infrastructure to allow them to participate, and can more easily attend CEN/LSP related meetings and speak on more “equal terms” with statutory body partners. In contrast,

small VCOs experience practical difficulties of involvement, because they cannot afford to take the time out to participate in formal structures such as the CENs. To illustrate the problem for the smaller VCOs: a small VCO with an Asian focus attempted to address this issue by appointing a volunteer to attend the CEN meetings on their behalf, with the intention that the volunteer would report back to the organisation on issues that were arising and whether it was thought appropriate for the organisation to then influence the issues being discussed. However, this proved difficult, because the organisation did not have the time to manage the process sufficiently which left this organisation back where it started, feeling isolated (see Box 7.21).

Box 7.21: Limiting Capacity of Small VCOs to Participate

"We do really need some feedback into the CEN process, so that we are not cut off, which is the general feeling at the moment." ET3

Leadership within the local VCO sector clearly rests with the bigger VCOs because they have a higher profile, which makes them more likely to be asked and more likely to be elected. To some extent these VCOs are the "usual suspects," albeit elected ones. The larger VCOs are able to provide somebody who knows what is going on, and are in touch with the sector's point of view. There was a sense from participants that active participation in bodies like the CENs were "self-selecting" (see Box 7.22), but as one respondent points out *"that is just how it works, really."* (HT3). It is part of the role that these umbrella bodies have as they often work across the borough(s), so cannot help but get involved with the bigger issues. In contrast, a small VCO that runs an activities after-school club may not necessarily see themselves having a wider role than that and many discount the purpose of CEN involvement.

Box 7.22: Usual Suspects in a better position to participate

"There is an element of the 'usual suspects,' 'self-selection' or 'self appointed' individuals. But we are talking about gatekeepers: someone who is trying to keep their stuff together, or someone who is genuinely concerned about other things. It is when it is the former that it can be dangerous." HT4

However, the "usual suspects," being in key leadership roles within the CEN and associated structures is not just about capacity, but also about active involvement. Though these VCOs do have greater capacity to be able to participate, also crucial is the willingness to be involved i.e. to see it a legitimate part of their role (see Box 7.23). It would appear that local knowledge and enthusiasm seemed to signify the leading groups.

Box 7.23: Involvement is the Key as Much as Capacity

"I am the only person here at 'X' organisation on the ESP structure, so it is not so much about capacity. It is more about involvement and how much you are prepared to put yourself forward for things and get involved." ET1

Even so, not everybody wants to work through the new organisations. After all, these are structures that government has imposed upon people. There are also those that are not willing to work with the guidelines that the local authority imposes on the new structures. Some in the sector are motivated by commitment or idealism and are impatient with bureaucracy. Thus some choose to remain outside of the formal process because as they say, *"they did not go into community work to sit on the board"* (see Box 7.24).

Box 7.24: Reasons for getting involved in the VCS at odds with CEN Role

"I think the way our mindset is within the voluntary sector in the statutory sphere is that we are all geared to this whole ideal of leadership, empowerment, community involvement, and there must be representation. It does not appeal to all. A lot of people will turn up their noses at meetings and not want to get involved. It depends on people's profession, experiences and preferences." HT3

This has led to a misconception that all VCOs wish to be "actively" engaged in the same way. It is possible to characterise the situation in terms of four different types: leaders, learners, limited engagers and alternative strategizers/ self-excluders (see Table 7.3). Table 7.4 sums up the distribution of interviewed VCOs in these categories across the two boroughs. Over time VCOs may move between these "engagement types." The principle movements in Haringey and Enfield are shown in Figure 7.2. VCOs in Enfield seemed to show more signs of leadership in implementing the new participation agenda, and more willingness/ ability to learn how to participate. In Haringey more VCOs seemed to be reluctant to lead or learn and there was more tendency to seek alternatives to participation in CEN type structures, perhaps as a result of the early experience of the CEN model in Haringey acting to "turn off" some VCOs from participation via these structures. This reinforces the contrast in the last section between the "learning culture" established in Enfield versus the "culture of scepticism" about CEN based participation established in Haringey.

Table 7.3: Typology of VCO Engagement with Participation Agenda

Engagement Types	Engagement Characteristics/ Traits
Leaders	VCOs taking a lead role early on in the CEN/LSP process, often established VCOs
Learners	"Dynamic" VCOs entering further into the CEN/LSP process as they learn the system, mentioned by established VCOs.
Limited Engagers	Peripheral players lacking the capacity or will to get involved. The possibilities of grant monies were the VCOs main rationale for participation in the CEN/LSP process
Alternative Strategizers/ Self Excluders	"Alternatives" to the CEN remained the best way for these VCOs to pursue their objectives, and which avoided "formalised participation."

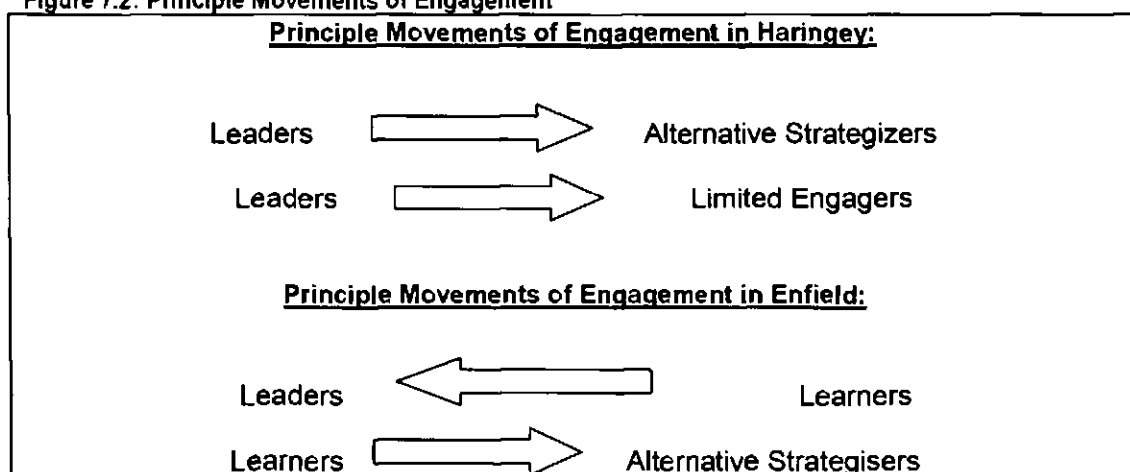
Table 7.4: Typology of Engagement of Respondents

Enfield				Haringey			
Leaders	Learners	Limited Engagers	Alternative Strategizers/ Self Excluders	Leaders	Learners	Limited Engagers	Alternative Strategizers/ Self Excluders
Elderly (L/U)	Disability (M)	BME (S)	Children (L)	Health (L/U)	Crime (S)	Arts (S)	Children and Young People (M/U)
Disability (L/U)	BME (S)				Crime/ BME (S)	Coaching (S)	BME (M/U)
Health (L/U)	Environment (S)						Disability (M)
Elderly (M)							Women (L/U)
BME (L)							

Key

L	M	S	U
Large VCO	Medium VCO	Small VCO	Umbrella Body

Figure 7.2: Principle Movements of Engagement



7.6.2 Specific Barriers to Effective Influence and Representation

There were some specific barriers to effective influence and representation, which either led to VCOs withdrawal or for them to not participate fully within the CEN processes. On the evidence of the interviews, these “barriers” are namely, time constraints, staffing constraints, information overload, differences in culture/ ways of working, and lack of commitment. These barriers which VCO representatives face have a direct effect and contribute to their level of power and influence in the decision-making process in terms of whether they can attend the meetings, whether they have been able to digest the information, and their ability to “think on their feet” and articulate an appropriate response in a politicised setting.

(a) Time Constraint

Some VCOs were now entering into “true leadership levels” and the kind of training they need takes a long time to learn (e.g. the psychology of meetings and the ramifications of the LSP). The CENs did provide representatives with training, which provided them with knowledge of government policy and conceptual information, so that they were able to attend board meetings, knowing what was going on and who the various parties were. However, the time commitment and the burden of meetings are huge. As a consequence, the respondents admitted that the training was poorly attended in both case study areas, because work overtook and “something had to give.” Many small VCOs expressed their sadness that they were “self excluding” from the CEN process. They were faced with the dilemma of whether they were serving their VCO by putting themselves forward as a community leader on a wider scale or were depriving it of their resource. Small VCOs were not able to do both; a choice had to be made.

(b) Staffing Constraints

Respondents reported that many VCO representatives were “*not effective communicators*” lacking the “*right skills*” to “*articulate their views.*” These “*limited skills*” were concerned with how CEN/ LSP processes worked and the wider political framework regarding the government agenda. VCO representatives also admitted to lacking confidence, often feeling overawed and overpowered within formal settings and structures such as the CEN/ LSP, with many respondents expressing that it can feel

"daunting," and that *"it can feel you are a very small voice, with very little influence or say"*(HT2). In addition to this, some elected representatives had jobs that did not allow them to get released in the daytime to attend partnership meetings as VCO representatives, whilst some representatives that already worked in this area/field were not prepared to have meetings after work. Consequently, representative roles fell back on a few individuals.

The success of VCO involvement in regeneration is determined by the "quality" of VCO leaders and representatives and their ability to work within the structures set up. Quality of VCO leadership is not just about training, but motivation, skills, charisma, energy and confidence (see Box 7.25). In both Enfield and Haringey such talented individuals seem crucial to the success of the participation agenda, especially at an early stage when the credibility of structures needs to be established. Enfield seems to have a pool of such individuals within the larger VCOs, which has been helpful to establishing a robust participation system.

Box 7.25: Leadership Quality

"It depends on the person. You could give somebody all the training in the world, but if they don't have the capability to bring that forward, it is not going to be successful. Effective representatives have to have both the skills and the persona or charisma to achieve. If you get on with the people in your Thematic Action Group, you have more opportunity to be vocal and to be heard." ET1

(c) Information Overload

Within complex governance processes "participation" involves the circulation of a lot of information of which only a small element is actually relevant to any particular VCO. For example, one respondent commented: "We are an organisation that is there for carers and by default people with care needs, our organisation is not really interested in other areas in general such as employment or environment. I am only interested in areas in terms of how it relates to our client group, so lots of the information that comes out of the CEN is not very useful to our organisations, other VCOs that are holistic and deal with a range of things such as benefits, employment, training etc may find it more useful to them."ET10. Information overload seemed to get in the way of effective participation by smaller VCOs.

(d) Differences in Culture/ Ways of Working

The structure of LSPs and their style of working tended to be largely dictated by that of the local authorities, with Thematic Action Groups based on professional and technical cultures rather than the more informal and participative cultures of the VCS. The decision making process was often unfamiliar to VCO groups. This was because it was based on "*bureaucratic procedures*," involving the consumption of lengthy reports that were alien to some from the VCS, and the "*jargon*" and "*technical language*" used also caused difficulties. For example, some respondents commented that during initial discussions, they felt they were entering into "*uncharted grounds*," whilst for others it was more familiar territory. Some went on to suggest that by the time VCO representatives "*get up to speed*," key decisions can have been taken, with targets and outputs already laid down and the scope for influence already limited. Ethnic groups can also be inhibited in participation in these formal settings, as English is often not their first language. It may be an important factor in the relative success of the participation process in Enfield that key VCO members of the CEN/LSP were in fact from larger VCOs that share this "bureaucratic culture" and were comfortable with it.

(e) Lack of Commitment

An indication of the level of commitment there was amongst the VCOs is provided by an example in Enfield, ECEN had 120 members, and in the last round of elections only 40 of those voted demonstrating a degree of lack of commitment. In fact, there were probably only 20 to 30 groups that were actively engaging in Enfield. Even so, it would appear that the sincerity of those VCO representatives that make the effort to participate gives them "credibility," via their commitment (even if management skills are lacking). Thus in CEN/ LSP forums they were "*treated as serious actors*" because their sincerity makes what VCOs contribute more "*real*" and "*powerful*," simply because it is not wound up in jargon and technical language. Thus awareness of how to remain sincere and authentic while learning the skills of formal participation should not be overlooked in efforts to impart managerial skills.

7.6.3 Reservations on Capability

Besides barriers to participation based on the capabilities of VCO actors, there are also reservations about the "pool of talent" from which VCO respondents are drawn.

(a) Who Becomes a CEN Representative?

One can infer from the interview responses that the structures set up were not inclusive enough to get the best from the VCO sector, as there was evidence that the “best” people (i.e. more competent people) were not always putting themselves forward in the election process. In terms of the “pool” of people that put themselves forward, they were not in all cases people who were at the heart of the community services, neither were they asked to prove that they were suited for what they were standing for. This reveals a key tension in the set-up of CENs, between the need for democratic legitimacy and effectiveness. Elections alone do not guarantee competence, even if it gives a degree of legitimacy.

Box 7.26: Elected Representatives not always the Best

“There are other people around who aren't at the partnership table that already have the capacity, yet the people around the table should have their capacity built.” HT8

“I think there is a problem with ECEN in the sense that not always the most appropriate or best people for that particular post are in key positions. ET7

“Some of the VCO representatives do possess the capacity to be representatives, some know exactly what is going on and are very elegant at putting their message across, usually they are not the people at the meetings though. There are two groups of people, the people who are the official representatives, who I think bring their own experience rather than their consulted constituents experiences to bear. And secondly, there are a set of people who aren't being asked ” HT8

Respondents also pointed out that in practice, “who can be CEN representatives,” often falls within two extremes: (1) a successful business person who can afford to work three days a week and give two days away voluntarily; and (2) somebody who lives on benefits and has the time because they cannot get employment. This to some extent squeezes out the people in the middle, i.e. experienced yet busy VCO managers or “full-time” volunteers. Within this group are significant people and charismatic individuals that the voluntary sector relies on that are simply not at the partnership table in a formal sense (see Box 7.26).

(b) Exclusion and Outsiders

VCO exclusion from participation can be distinguished with respect to three factors: (1) choice, (2) capacity and (3) discrimination. In some cases it may include more than one of these factors, but for the simplicity of this section they are explored in isolation.

(i) Outsiders by Choice

Some VCO leaders seemed to remain outside, the "collaborative" structures by choice. In Haringey, for example, many umbrella bodies felt they worked better outside the new CEN based system (see Table 7.4). In Enfield, a frequently cited example was that of a children's VCO that had become disenchanted with the CEN. This led the children's VCO representative to withdraw from being a CEN representative, but is now on the partnership board in the capacity of a service provider, because they thought they would be more effective working this way. Therefore, it would seem VCOs pursue different strategies of engagement based on practicalities/ opportunities, which may cause a "conflict of interest" (see Box 7.27).

Box 7.27: Outsiders by Choice causing Conflict of Interests

"I think it is about holding on to their power, that is what their issue is." ET1

"I don't think that it has helped the CEN, when people behave in that way. Disassociating themselves from the CEN has not helped: it has clouded the issue " ET2

"They were going to these Boards anyway as statutory sector invitees as VCS service providers, so being there as a CEN representative didn't really have any benefits for them and they feed back to a wider community via different forums anyway, so it was just like a another layer they didn't need. What is the benefit, if you are clearly there and it works."ET10

"I had stood as CEN representative for three years and I felt that I should give someone else the opportunities to stand and because by then I had already established my relationships with those people. They asked me to stay on the board, and I thought, well, actually, that gives ECEN the opportunity to have three representatives there and I would still be on the board as well. So I thought it would give us more voluntary sector representatives on the children and young peoples thematic action group."ET7

Some campaigning groups, and national associations remained outside in order to maintain their political edge/ affiliation and independence, and *"there is a place for that somewhere."* (ET4). National associations remained outside or parallel to CENs, because these organisations have a national rather than local brief and are "self sustaining," so were thought *"just too big for something like CENs – these organisations have enough money."* (HT5). As a result of such self- exclusion, some talented VCO representatives and organisations do not contribute to the CEN based participation process.

(ii) Outsiders by Lack of Capacity

In contrast, some VCOs remained outside of the formal process because a lack of capacity prevented them from even getting on board. VCOs need to be in certain "form" to get on board, (i.e. constituted, registered charity). Here an ethnic issue emerged, as

it was felt by many participants that the BME organisations were still under involved, needing greater support to enter into this arena at the formal level, and participate, because many of these organisations lacked funding, resources and facilities to get to this basic level. The Asian community, in particular was pointed to amongst participants for their lack of capacity, which to a certain extent led to their "self exclusion." Similarly, it would appear that faith groups were not strongly involved within the CENs. However, it should be noted that participants were particularly guarded in discussing issues related to faith. In Enfield, in particular it was thought that Muslim faith groups were absent from the CEN membership due to their lack of capacity and through self-exclusion and in some cases discrimination. Similarly, culturally focussed groups, and historically tenants and residents associations had not been very involved, because of these capacity issues. These organisations lacked the structural capacity to liaise and saw limited benefits from engagement with the CEN. These judgements by respondents' support and flesh out earlier points made in the observational and survey based chapters.

(iii) Outsiders by Discrimination

The CEN process, because of a lack of inclusiveness and accessibility, often seemed to systematically exclude disability VCOs. Disabled service users found the meetings too daunting, and training was often not particularly friendly to disabled people. Often a whole day's training for disabled service users was difficult. For example, a Chair of a disability VCO had recently been a representative on the consultation on Chase Farm and Barnet Hospital, and the last meeting was all day at Euston (see Box 7.28).

Box 7.28: Lack of Inclusiveness of CEN Process

She said, "I can't cope with it" and she is absolutely ideal as she is a continuing user of the NHS, an expert patient tutor, has a good grasp of issues and has experienced so many different services that she knows exactly what is wrong with them. But she just cannot cope with the meetings. You go back and you say, "She needs it to be shorter, cut out the waffle, needs comfort breaks at regular intervals," And they say, "She just has to ask" No, she is not going to ask. She is going to slip out of the meeting, you have got to make your meeting accessible to all." ET9

Greater recognition of disabled people's needs was also often absent. For example, the CENs had never managed to get a signer for the deaf to go to the meetings. There was a misconception that deaf people were not interested in CEN proceedings and that if there was somebody coming along, then the CEN would book a signer, but disabled service users believed "*It should not be that way round*" (see Box 7.29).

Box 7.29: Outsiders by Discrimination: Disability VCOs

"After how ever many years I have been coming to meetings and saying, 'I can't hear (deaf in one ear). It is no good shouting at me. You need a sound system because if you are talking over there, and there is background noise over here I am not hearing you, if you have a sound system then I am fine.' I think it was actually three meetings ago that they had a sound system." ET9

"It is not the same issues facing BME groups where their first language isn't English, because in the domain there is the potential for them to master the language. But for a profoundly deaf person there isn't or a person with learning difficulties or a physical impairment that isn't always possible." ET9

Consequently, disabled people were not engaged effectively or linked to the CENs in any meaningful way. Their organisations may be, but disabled people would not be at the CEN meetings. Many of the VCOs with a disability focus were of the opinion that they should not have separate meetings, and that mainstreaming and integration was the way forward. A barrier to this is the misconception that disability organisations funds are high (e.g. because they pay their volunteers or have money to spend, because they cater for disabled people). In fact disability VCOs have to accommodate for what is actually required for disabled people to be able to contribute, because that is what there remit is (see Box 7.30).

Box 7.30: Misconceptions Hinder Participation by Disabled VCO Sector

"One of our treasurers is absolutely brilliant (she is profoundly deaf) and at meetings we had to get in a lip speaker for her, so that cost us about £100 a meeting and our transport bill was about £100 at the time, so each trustees meeting was costing us £200 to £300 a time. And we were having people saying, 'well, you pay your volunteers, and we were 'No actually they are not getting any of this, this is what they need to contribute, and you've got to do it.' You can't just say you've got to book -if it is an open meeting then you've got to provide it all the time for the opportunity for those that may wish to come. 'We can't say,' oh bugger off we have not got the money for it " ET9

In sum, the participation process clearly still to some extent lacks effectiveness because certain groups decide or are forced to remain outside of the CEN. At the same time, there is a huge time commitment for those who do try to take part, and that is one of the problems CENs face. Attendance at CEN meetings has become less, as the "look and see" phase is over. For example, in Haringey it was estimated that perhaps up to 80% of HarCEN's members were involved purely to access funding (i.e. the majority were in fact "limited engagers"). One solution to the loss of interest after the "look and see" phase in Enfield was to introduce themed forums to improve the way CEN responds to issues.

(c) Tensions in Representing the Community

From the interviews it seems that there is an ongoing issue about how CEN representatives represent their constituents i.e. the "own organisation" versus

"sector view". So far it seems that representatives tend to remain parochial, but this is an issue not clear in the mind of some VCOs. Uncertainty persists in terms of whom they represent (organisation or sector) on which forums. Similarly, VCO roles on partnership boards were often unclear. Some representatives still saw themselves as representing their own organisation not the wider sector, and as a consequence were only interested in putting forward issues that related to their own private client group that they worked with. One of the biggest difficulties for VCOs was feeling that they were not able to actually represent any constituents because they were not getting much feedback from people. The difficulty here was actually engaging their constituents in things that they were perhaps not particularly interested in or could not see the relevance (see Box 7.31). This remains an unresolved tension in the practice of participation so far.

Box 7.31: Own VCO or Sector Views? An unresolved Issue for some CEN Representatives

"The gap is where we get to the next stage: where it is clear that the representatives are there to represent the whole VCS and not necessarily represent their own organisation. We have still to crack that." ET2

"How we actually get what people out there really think, rather than what I think they think has huge difficulties." ET10

"In the Learning Disability Partnership I am there as a voluntary sector representative, whilst at the Early Years Child forum I am there as "X" organisation. It is different on different forums. It is different, how people are voted on and represented and that is a problem." HT7

"VCOs are there because they think they will benefit their organisation, and it may be by default, but it is not the purpose of it and I don't like that." ET10

"There are one or two VCOs that give the sector a voice. But that is their voice, not the voice of the sector. It is the voice of the people that sit around the table. They don't come to us and say what would you like to see? And the only way in which you can be involved in that process is to become part of the organisation, either as a trustee or a director. So there is a way of you influencing it, but only by becoming part of them." HT8

7.6.4. Enfield/Haringey Contrast

The differences in the two boroughs reflect the different challenges that Haringey faces, which come from having (a) a more diverse population; (b) a more transient/ rapidly changing population; and (c) a more "deprived" population. Of course all of these issues also exist in Enfield, but they exist on a far greater scale in Haringey. The transience of the population leads to (a) a problem of establishing long term working relationships/ well established groups and (b) more new, younger, smaller groups, which my results show are least likely to be involved in CENs and formal structures.

The differences in the two boroughs are due not only to initial differences in capacity of the local VCO sector, but also to how training and learning have been approached and how the initial experience with the CEN has subsequently affected the willingness of the VCS to become involved in training initiatives. The impression from the interviews was that Enfield VCOs had a clear idea of how the VCO sector can be involved, and possess a perception of a hierarchy of VCO influence. In Enfield, for the first set of representatives participation was an unknown entity, in terms of the amount of work that was required within each thematic action group that they may be elected to. The realisation that it was not just about sitting on one group, (as there were very often subgroups, which required a lot of commitment from each representative) tested the commitment of some representatives, but the experience was usually positive enough to keep them engaged, while they learned how to make an impact. This ongoing commitment required the VCOs to see evidence of impact/effect, which was missing in Haringey, but present in Enfield (see Box 7.32).

Box 7.32: Commitment comes with Impact

"Some of the partnership groups took a long time to work with the VCS representatives. It was a steep learning curve and many representatives had not worked in that capacity before, they were all breaking new ground. For the first couple of years, some groups were quite difficult." ET4

"The representatives are taking it more seriously than before. I think that the commitment is there now and that is because the representatives are actually seeing a difference now, which makes sense, because as you see something concrete happening it spurs on involvement and participation." ET1

"As we get older as a partnership the confidence of people is extending and we are learning more." ET2

In Haringey there was a shortage of VCOs leadership in both depth and breadth, while the CEN failed to find the right role or level for its self. Haringey is a very deprived borough and the VCS is made up of very small groups with no tradition of co-operation. The big charities are less visible in Haringey, with the exception of organisations such as Age Concern; others such as Mencap are only present as a local branch of the charity (i.e. a charity shop of a national organisation). We have seen earlier that the larger VCOs were the most effective in the new system, (in terms of resources, time and management culture) so areas without them are at a disadvantage from the start (see Box 7.33).

Box 7.33: Leadership Shortages

"I think there are very few people in the voluntary sector in Haringey that very obviously have leadership qualities. It is very limited. It is not a role that people are setting up to do, it is not their main purpose to sit at a partnership table. That's not why they set up their organisation." HT8

"There are not any big VCOs in Haringey. What that means is that none of us truly have the infrastructure to do any major campaigning or influencing work. So we may provide very good services, but we have very limited infrastructure." HT7

"Members meetings are not run at that level: they are at one extreme or the other. You either have someone telling you how important they are and they are not listening to what people's concerns are or someone that just doesn't engage with the structures because their own problems in their own group are just too personal. The middle range of people is the sort of people who are not going to those meetings because they do not learn anything useful." HT8

Haringey's early experience did not convince VCOs that partnership in the CEN model of participation was effective and that investment in training was likely to be worthwhile. For example, the VCO sector leadership did not feel best used by current structures, because they were overly formal and constrained. This has led Haringey VCOs back to a "councillor/political model," to seek alternative models of consultation/ policy influence to the CEN/ LSP model. They seek to work outside of it in ways, which are more creative, less formal, more individually driven (i.e. by politicised individuals) (see Box 7.34). This is also reflected in Figure 7.2. This is in contrast to Enfield where the CEN based model of participation has been made to work.

Box 7.34: Seeking Alternatives In Haringey

"You make priorities by bringing people together, you don't say this is the agenda, which is more important? You say tell me what the problems are? And you create the right environment, having an appropriate location to meet and support (i.e. interpreters and childcare). Therefore, acknowledging the value of those giving something by establishing a two-way process i.e. what do you want to get out of the consultation too?" HT8

"A lot of organisations in Haringey are very small, with just one person and a couple of volunteers, so obviously they are stretched a lot of the time, but given the right support there is potential. Umbrella groups could fulfil this role, bringing people together on a regular basis to inform, get views and feeding it back, so that it is a two-way process." HT2

"I would like the agenda set by the people around the table. For the Chair to be rotated around those people and some sort of discussion to take place around who should actually be at the table." HT8

7.7 Service Delivery: Implications of the shift from Grant Aid to Tendering, Commissioning and Procurement

In this section there is a change in emphasis from previous sections, as these were "looking back" or "reflecting" on VCO experience of the working in the participation process so far. Here we are looking at currently emerging issues and anxieties about how the process is evolving (and might evolve in the future) as it moves from

“consultative” participation, over policy priorities and content, to “active” participation in service delivery. This is a new stage in the participation agenda, and it is a strength of the methodology adopted that by incorporating a “key informant interview stage,” we can identify emerging issues as well as reflecting on start up stage experiences.

Respondents were worried that the agenda and practices of the VCO sector would increasingly be shaped by government funding regimes by the rules of service provider contracts and the need to be more “business-like,” exposing VCOs to market pressures, and increasing competition for funding (see Box 7.35), if they allowed themselves to be pulled further into this government led process. Though the latter might in some ways, “raise standards” in the sector, it also raised fears that smaller VCOs (unable to bid for funding or meet accountability expectations) would be “squeezed out” of the participation process (see Box 7.36), while ones that were co-opted would lose innovativeness and the voluntary incentive, which is their distinctiveness.

The shift towards contracts rather than grants, moving towards a more loan based system and a specific service, means a different way of operation for many in the VCS. Organisations are now being forced to refocus and decide whether they want public money or not. There are issues about the way in which the sector is being pushed into so-called “business –like” methods of working. But one thing seems clear:

“The fallout is going to be very destructive. I think there is going to be a set of “losers.” (ET6)

Box 7.35: Increasing Competition for Funding

“Having to bid for contracts, and tender from the local authority is not just going to put a lot of people off, they just will not be capable of doing it, so that will mean there will be much more competition for the Lottery. It is a big source for the voluntary sector now. It is a substitute for services that should be statutory provision.” HT3

Box 7.36: Raising Standards v Being Squeezed Out in a Business- like Climate

"Effectively, what it will do is sort the good from the bad and the strong from the weak and those VCOs with a niche." HT1

"We have Local Strategic Partnership, Local Area Agreements ... and the danger is the voluntary sector just gets squeezed out. We are all increasingly being told that we need to become more business -like, we have to look at being social enterprises, which is missing the point of any voluntary sector organisation and the reasons for them setting up in the first place, and the reasons people give up their time to be trustees or volunteers. It is not to behave like a business. I think this will mean people will get disillusioned and people will not want to put in their time to do that." HT2

"If commissioning becomes the biggest source of money, then what you will see almost certainly is a lot of small groups just dying because they can't sustain themselves. Smaller organisations will not really be able to continue to play a role in delivering services under such a climate." HT5

"It is not a level playing field. Alright, I don't think it has ever been, but I think it is getting worse, because of the introduction of such things, because you are already negatively impacting upon those organisations that haven't got the resources to read up on everything and go to all the meetings, get ready for procurement and quality marks. The smaller organisations just haven't got the time to do that and it will be a major loss in terms of equality and community cohesion, if that is allowed to happen, because if you lose all the little specialist groups and start looking at how everything can become generic, there will come a time, I feel when a crisis could implode upon all of us. I think we should be on guard." HT3

"I think it is inevitable that some people will forget some of their service users, and there won't be any spaces in commissioning for those people. I think there will be very painful times, when lots of organisations disappear, particularly the tiny ones." HT8

"You might lose a lot of smaller groups because they won't be able to get core funding from the local authority. I think we will see it changing the future around the smaller organisations, and it will be interesting to see how they will cope with that." ET1

"It has become like a business and some of the small organisations will definitely fall by the wayside, because before smaller organisations were able to obtain funding. This new style of working changes everything, where work is being contracted out to VCOs rather than them receiving grant aid. It is quite a task and they should not try to put pressure on voluntary groups to do this. It is too difficult for organisations like us." ET8

"The smaller, you are the more difficult it is going to be, because if we are finding it hard and we are quite big then small groups are going to have tremendous difficulties." ET10

"50% of new businesses fail within their first three years - is that where we want to push the voluntary sector? We were not set up to fail. We were set up to help to deliver a need and a service. If we are failing, it is because we are being pushed towards failure, where as if a business is failing they would just be seen as not competent enough or that the market doesn't want them. It isn't the same for the voluntary sector we are different, we are a different way of working, and it will change the way we perceive whom we are." HT4

7.7.1. New Styles of Service Delivery

This new style of service delivery is a particular issue for small groups that are user led, because the government agenda is to contract across regions. This is not feasible for user led organisations, because they are dealing with individuals, and usually individuals at a "local" or neighbourhood scale. This creates real tension with developing/ retaining local capacity (see Box 7.37), as a respondent commented:

"anything that is any further than down the road is difficult, particularly if they have a disability." What needs to be recognised under this new regime of service delivery is that these organisations have a value in their own right. User led organisations are also fearful that they will be particularly disadvantaged, because the kind of services that these clients require are not the sort of services that will be commissioned, and as a consequence their funding will be torn apart. Essentially these VCOs will not be offered the opportunity to even enter into commissioning activities, or it will not be for the opportunity that they wanted, or were set up to provide.

Box 7.37: Problems for User Led Groups In Service Delivery

"The local authorities are setting the agenda and the agenda doesn't include things small organisations are doing, because by definition they are filling in the gaps, the contracts won't be available to deal with little specific issues." HT2

"Smaller organisations are not at that stage and probably never will be and don't want to be. They will die by the wayside, which will be a huge shame. I think some will say, and very wisely - "We are not going down that route. We don't have any money or paid staff and we are going to stay like it, because our main interest isn't contractual work." ET9

"Vulnerable groups are groups that you are working with that you know their workers are committed and a lot of their workers are volunteers. If you suddenly make those volunteers bureaucratic report writing, record-keeping bureaucrats you may lose those people. We are not all geared up within the themes coming up. I'm not saying we couldn't be, because we could. But is it right for everyone? That is what needs to be recognised." HT3

"I think there is a set of people that will just ignore the whole process - The small faith based communities." HT8

Thus, though the smaller VCOs may eventually be successfully helped into consultative participation (the focus of existing efforts to "broaden" VCO participation in CEN/ LSPs), involving them in active service delivery participation raises a whole new set of challenges. Many factors affect their willingness and ability to join in the service delivery regime. It depends what a VCO is intended to do, its purpose for formation and whether they need to change or are indeed prepared to change in order to get money for Service Level Agreements. To this end, a conflict in working culture is becoming apparent in this new environment and a number of smaller VCOs were distinctly uncomfortable in it (see Box 7.38).

Box 7.38: Conflict and Change in Working Culture in Service Delivery Role

"I have never worked like this, I just worked voluntarily, to suddenly be putting signatures on contracts is scary. It becomes quite a big issue because there is that pressure to deliver. And if that pressure has moved away from the intentions i.e. our own personal motivation for doing the work, people may get demotivated." HT4

"By getting into tendering will put an awful lot of people off." ET10

"It is pushing us to ensure we have the correct policies and procedures in place, it is forcing us to think about employing people, we have never employed people before, we have always been completely voluntary. It is putting pressure on us to deliver on a daily basis rather than fairly haphazardly, it changes the nature of who we are from being strictly user and volunteer led. We are now having to put people in place that can do a particular task/job description, rather than working towards creating solutions to what we see around us, which is how we have always been - solution focused and now we are becoming task focused." HT4

It would appear that the smaller VCOs need a different, stable financial regime from the competitive, management heavy service delivery system that is emerging. They can no longer rely on grants to provide a service that is sustainable overtime, one suggestion was that if an organisation has had a grant for three years and it has proved viable then, it was thought by participants that it should be converted to a Service Level Agreement automatically. But at the moment the larger VCOs appear to be benefiting, and the CENs need to intervene to ensure the sustainability of the smaller VCO sector into the next stage of participation in delivery.

7.7.2 Selectivity and Concentration

Respondents expect that service delivery will be highly selective and concentrated in a few voluntary groups that statutory agencies think are proven bodies, which they feel safe with and are able to deliver, not only because of the varying capacities of the VCOs sector, but also because of VCOs awareness of how policy has been presented to the VCO sector (see Box 7.39). For example, in the Enfield case within the Local Area Agreements it was thought very few VCOs will be able to input into the process. It contains several priorities around volunteering and the local authority has already set out a number of fairly big VCOs, which they think will be able to deliver on that. Virtually all other VCOs will not be involved in the process. The process was described by participants as *"favouring tried and tested VCO providers,"* usually the bigger umbrella VCOs, which in turn is thought to force a defensive consolidation amongst the smaller and medium sized VCOs. A response within the sector was for larger VCOs to *"lead"* smaller VCOs and part of a larger organisations role is now thought to be around subcontracting out to smaller organisations and involving them in the process, since

even large VCOs can no longer go it alone (see Box 7.40). This is a strategy, which seems to strengthen both sides of the sector, and may be a way forward as the service delivery role develops. The case of Enfield shows that the VCS is capable of adapting to the demands of the participation agenda, and more/ different adaptations are needed in the "delivery" role.

Box 7.39: Selectivity of a few VCOs

"There may be a risk of self selectivity of larger VCOs, because statutory agencies will consider these to be better placed to deliver and other groups will ultimately get bypassed. You really need to be made bigger in order to survive, and a consortium would be the best way round that." HT9

"There is to be some level of favouritism, some VCOs won't even have to put in an application and may well be the ones that are commissioned. That is a fear for small VCOs getting involved in the CENs structure." HT5

"I don't think the smaller organisations will survive, and the larger organisations will rule the roost. Nationally, you can see that happening now. The bigger organisations have come in and Hoovered up all the contracts because they have the capacity and lower unit costs in terms of competitive tendering." HT2

Box 7.40: New Responsibilities for Large VCOs

"I know if large groups think they can go it alone, it is at their own peril. You cannot operate in isolation now and the only way forward is to work with the range of groups that are providing very important services. Larger groups have a role in terms of taking a lead to submitting a tender and ensuring they are incorporating all organisations that are meeting people's needs in the tendering process." ET2

7.7.3 Change of Role: Loss of Independence and Creative Role

In this new climate of service provider contracts voluntary organisations are essentially taking on statutory work and with this comes the risk of a change of role for VCOs from that of "campaigner" to "provider (see Box 7.41). There will always be groups that want to provide services, and there will be groups that are campaigning groups, but this raises the question as to whether one role will compromise the other and must VCOs choose? It was thought amongst respondents that the emerging financial/ delivery regime is already beginning to compromise their roles, but VCOs may get to a point where they may need to do some service level contract work, simply in order to be able to do other components of their work that they actually want to do. This was a real anxiety, uncovered in this phase of the research.

Box 7.41: Compromising Role for VCOs

"We're not going down that avenue – Supporting people into Employment. We are not applying for that money, because it would be outside the ethos of this organisation. We felt that certain types of funding and meeting certain targets that were not in disabled people's best interest are not something we could do." ET9

"The local authority said, 'You do realise, you won't be able to advocate for people anymore.' Now part of our role is to advise disabled people on all avenues of support, so we do still offer an advocacy service. But my concern is that we might get to a stage with the local authority where they will try to prevent us from providing that service and then we will have to say 'well we can't do it then.'" ET9

Respondents recognise that in this "change of role" there are dangers that VCOs are answering to a state defined "personal specification" and are therefore no longer independent organisations, because it is no longer the VCOs that are choosing how to deliver their services anymore. The primary danger of this is that the "creativity" and "entrepreneurship" of the VCS will be lost, with the VCS becoming increasingly part of the "state machine." It is perceived as much less independent and seen as more part of statutory provision and the apparatus of the local authority, making it harder for VCOs to engage with some of the "harder to reach groups." Consequently, there were fears amongst the respondents that those VCOs that are co-opted into service delivery will lose innovativeness and the voluntary incentive, which is their distinctiveness. Many feel they would lose credibility, identity and autonomy and would no longer be seen as "alternative delivers," as they move away from their roots, compromising their role, ethos, and way of working (i.e. an effective de-radicalisation of their role). Instead of a driving motivation based on helping people, the VCO purpose becomes about service delivery, which is a fundamental change of philosophy for many in the voluntary sector.

Some respondents fear the more VCOs are tied into contracts, the less flexibility they have, which could have serious consequences, such as whether it even fits with VCOs constitution (i.e. what an organisation was initially set up to do), and the increasingly limited scope for innovation. What this dialogue highlights is a certain lack of understanding from statutory bodies about how the voluntary sector works, what VCOs do and how they do it. The voluntary sector can traditionally change things quite quickly. They can see a problem or issue and can just go straight there, but the more they are tied to "specifics" of delivering services to a fixed contract the less likely it is that they are free to do that. This raises the question as to whether the source of VCO flexibility will be lost as they get contractually enmeshed with the statutory sector. There is likely to be less opportunity for innovative programmes that have not been thought

about or identified early enough in the commissioning process to be brought online at a later date.

There is also a risk that those groups that can compete and enter into the race for service delivery contracts may become “narrower” in their role, (or alternatively be forced into a wider role they do not necessarily want), because such contracts are aimed at delivering specific components, rather than a range of services that an organisation may customarily provide (i.e. warping priorities), perhaps even taking them away from the initial “purpose” or reason for setting up the organisation. It may also transpire that becoming a service provider may constrain other innovative or challenging roles, because VCOs will focus on areas that they are comfortable with and can gain funding to provide. This is especially the case where VCOs have cost boundaries because they have to drop off a lot of things they were doing externally, in order to satisfy the contract (see Box 7.42).

Box 7.42: Change of Role Priorities for VCOs

We don't say what we think should be funded. They tell us what they are going to fund. I think our level of power in the processes is appalling.”HT8

“You have to deliver what the contract is offering rather than the specific thing that you want to do. You have to twist what you're doing, and there is an extent to which that is dangerous. You chase the money, you see a contract comes out and it says it's for this, and you think, well it isn't really what we do. But if we are creative with our application perhaps we can fit into that. I think this will bread that and make the problem worse, because there will not be an alternative, either you deliver this contract with these outputs, or you don't get the money. So that is what you have to do.” HT2

“It is short-sighted-ness to be led by funders about what VCOs are going to create, because actually it is also about us influencing what funders pay for. I think plenty of funders would be fairly responsive to a bit of lobbying. These contracts are not flexible. They are for organisations to deliver on one specific aspect of their work, rather than an array of different services that they provide. In the work of the voluntary sector you have to be far more flexible and these contracts don't allow for that.” ET8

“We don't want the local authority to become our taskmaster and actually direct us into the work that we should be doing, because when you got a grant before you spent it as you saw fit in terms of the needs of your service users. Now it has become a political agenda and there is a real danger there with those organisations that don't fit with what the local authority wants to do as they will not be given money and then they have survival issues on their hands. Those that do get money are pushed into directions that are not necessarily comfortable for them.”ET7

“We have quite a diverse range of services that we provide, but with this new culture, we may well drop some of those services because we need to focus on those that we do really well. In terms of services to the public that may well impact on what's being offered out there, which is sad.” ET2

“It is not following your heart, or the purpose of your organisation, it is following the money and that will always be the same.” ET10

The key point here for respondents' was the extent to which the service delivery agenda is in danger of being “preset” via national policy. For example, a VCO set up to

support disabled children and their families had been doing some work in schools regarding transition from primary to secondary schools. There was some money on offer from the local authority, but they wanted the organisation to work with children who were truánting, because the truancy rate was high and that was the local authorities current agenda. But this was not the VCO's agenda, as they commented: *"It is trying to narrow our vision down. We are currently in the process of negotiations. We could have run the risk of not getting that funding, because they have got a very narrow view of what they want, and are only looking for somebody who will take their money to do that. It becomes a bit of a straitjacket, and you've got to work hard to get them to see a broader picture. (ET7).* To this end, the risk is that the VCO sector becomes too "funding" and "target" led, (not "needs" or user driven), leading to a loss of innovatory activity of VCOs, as they have to follow the government agenda.

One emerging response to the challenges of delivery is for VCOs to consolidate the "strands" in which they focus their work, and if contracts do not fit into those "strands" then the VCO does not go for such funding, and tries to work through other means. However, if an organisation cannot work in that way, and has to seek funding before they can do anything, then clearly their independence will be lost, because they are more driven by others agendas than their own. Sometimes this may not be all that different from how it always was, but there was a feeling among respondents that there is less opportunity for the "mavericks," the "innovators" and the "independent." Some respondents saw the VCOs service delivery role, as a "poisoned chalice" (see Box 7.43), likely to pose real dilemmas but not easily refused.

Box 7.43: Loss of Independence

"The innovation and creativity of the voluntary sector and individuality of each voluntary sector organisation could be diluted. You get some characters that come through the voluntary sector that are potential councillors, some have gone on to become MPs, that was part of the vitality of the voluntary sector, having that creative field and using the voluntary sector as a stepping stone in some cases, to move on and become key players in influencing decisions, that would be a dilution. Remember, we are the voluntary sector. That's why we work in these organisations, because we want to work in the voluntary sector, and people shouldn't forget that." HT3

"You have no independence. You're delivering someone else's agenda, the whole point of bringing us to the table was because we were independent and alternative delivers. But this problem is partly driven by the government agenda." HT4

"Once you are inside the commissioning process and you have given consent to the way it is going to work you have signed yourself away. Once you have signed a contract to deliver, you have got to do that. It does mean some loss of control. However, it is for organisations to make sure there are things in the signed agreement that preserve its own ability to make changes to the way it operates." HT8

"Before you were delivering services, according to the needs of your specific client group. Now when you sign a contract it becomes more difficult and you have to keep looking at the piece of paper and identifying what it was you promised." ET8

"A huge issue for the sector is are you going to build up your capacity, contract for services and maybe move away from your original objectives, but what about an organisation's ethos? Some of these dilemmas compromise that." ET9

A related anxiety among some respondents was that the contracting out of service delivery was seen as a sort of "semi - privatisation" that would lead to "price- cutting" competition between VCOs, consolidating on larger cheaper service providers and thus lower levels of service. It was feared among VCO participants that service delivery would be used to drive down costs with the expectation that the voluntary sector can do some tasks "for free," and that will be reflected in how much statutory bodies are offering for contracts (see Box 7.44). An example in point here, is a carers VCO scheme that lost their contract with the local authority. The contract went to a housing provider, because they were 50p an hour cheaper. Where smaller VCOs lack the competence or confidence to properly cost their bids for service contracts, this risk is high.

Box 7.44: Sami – Privatisation of VCS

"The voluntary sector needs to find an effective way of costing their services, so that they don't miss out or are offered peanuts when the big fishes start jumping up and down. I think statutory bodies think yes, let's commission the voluntary sector to deliver the service, because they will be getting value for money. The voluntary sector needs to find a way of addressing that, because it would be useful to find a way of sustaining the use of volunteers. Otherwise we will not have anybody volunteering to do work any more."

HT5

We are in a position where we will say yes, we will provide a play schema for you for 30 disabled children, but we will only do it if you give us this amount of money. When they say to us, "Can you do it for half," we will say "no," where as another VCO desperate for cash, who hasn't got management skills will say "okay we will do it for half the price." **HT7**

"If there is a push for more commissioning then there will be more opportunity for people to be taken advantage of, it will happen more often, and there will be additional risks around whether services being delivered are at a good enough quality and are being run safely." **ET8**

A key challenge facing the CENs currently is how they can prepare VCOs groups and organisations for this change in service delivery, so that they are able to submit for contracts, yet remain true to VCO ethos and their own purposes. Preparation for the VCS to even understand what tendering is about is required, so a lot of training needs to be provided. The VCO sector needs to be more "professional" to affect service delivery, without losing its ethos. Some organisations are already preparing themselves for this new commissioning process and changing their memorandum of association or constitution to enable them to meet the requirements of potential tenders, with a respondent commenting: *"You have got to start to learn the game in order to survive."* **(ET1)**

Certainly, the service delivery process and delivery role will change the nature of the VCOs and so there will be a number of organisations that will choose not to tender. These will be VCOs based on like-minded people who wanted to do something that was not statutory work, or indeed to pick up where the statutory sector has failed. There will be schemes that will choose to fold, rather than do something they do not want to do. But the lure of the safe money, and the need to survive will attract many into active engagement with this new phase of participation forcing change on the sector in the process.

7.7.4. Enfield/ Haringey Contrast

As with previous sections, a contrast in viewpoints between Haringey and Enfield participants is apparent on this topic, reflecting different local expectations and

experiences. For example, it was recognised in both boroughs that there is a need for consortiums to be created around particular themes to work co-operatively in bidding for service contracts rather than via a huge CEN. Smaller consortiums would help avoid narrowing of the sector via mutual support (i.e. bidding together). However, while Enfield seems to have gone down this route with some success, no leadership on this route has emerged from HarCEN. The fragmentation of the voluntary sector is still a significant problem in Haringey. They are not used to working in partnerships, which needs to happen before they can even embark on forming any sort of consortiums. Haringey respondents give a good analysis of the weaknesses of an over fragmented VCO sector, which needs more mutual awareness and collaboration, which HAVCO and HarCEN are not providing or appear to be even recognising. However, the respondents were less good at proposing structural remedies. Already, this fragmentation has led to issues such as gaps in provision by VCOs and competitiveness amongst the VCOs, and competitive bidding for funds, further reducing mutual trust (see Box 7.45).

Interestingly, respondents who were especially critical of the service delivery role in Haringey once again offer “alternatives” or another strategy/model of how VCO activity might work. One of those is a plan to create a team of “activists” that are trained and active in local politics and VCO work. Other models of VCO activity proposed, include ways of operating outside the overly formal CEN type structures, placing a bigger role for “active individuals,” who can be helped and trained into such roles, (i.e. a more individually driven local politics). These suggestions reflect the low status that the CEN has established in Haringey, such that alternative models for VCO participation are already being debated in the sector and also the fact that the local political culture in Haringey seems less at ease with “bureaucratic” participation structures, and offers a more individualised, and conflictual approach to local politics, a point developed in the next chapter.

Box 7.45: Haringey's Fragmented VCO Sector

"We need to break the ice of separate working and encourage more partnership working." HT6

"What we have ended up with is lots and lots of employment schemes for lone parents and very little that is doing job ready stuff with refugees and asylum seekers. We have ended up with double of one and almost nothing of another." HT8

"There isn't any trust between groups." HT5

"The service delivery role in Haringey will develop very slowly and very poorly." HT2

"The smaller VCOs, which will be lost are actually the majority of HarCEN's membership, which is a huge concern. This may be why the membership is not growing." HT5

From the viewpoint of the policy community this section has highlighted new challenges likely to face both the VCO sector and those statutory policy workers driving the participation agenda. In the earlier stages of establishing principles and practices for (local level) participation, key issues were ensuring credible, trusted and effective infrastructure for participation (CENs/ LSPs) and ensuring that participation in these was broadly based. Initially, the VCO sector needed the skills/ competencies to participate in terms of ability to discuss, and influence agendas, plus political awareness, skills in networking and collaborating. Establishing and securing the expectation of participation and trust in structures was key. Now in this emerging stage of "active participation" in policy delivery, new skills of negotiation, budget planning, contract management, working to targets and accountability are to be at the fore, while VCOs must not lose sight of their own agendas, ethos and innovativeness in adopting these roles.

7.8 Conclusions

The principle and practice of participation is embedded within Enfield and Haringey, but is it robust? Participation has been unevenly achieved, and at some cost of extra burdens on VCO players. Although, the CENs are seen as important vehicles there are reservations on their impact so far, with them still to influence actual outcomes. The "Thematic Groups" are the level at which most tangible impact over policy content and policy priorities have been achieved by VCOs.

There is a strong sense that the structures for participation are still evolving, as participants learn about their potential and gain experience. Enfield in particular has established a pattern of review; evolution and learning which has increased VCO

confidence in the system set up, and has led to more effective outcomes and positive expectations. A learning culture is recognised and the "bureaucracy of participation" established. The process of VCO involvement can be seen as counter-productive if it is done badly, as in Haringey's case, where "positive evolution" is not apparent. The new funding regime puts more power back with the local authority, raising doubts as to whether the principle of VCO involvement (and CEN and related structures) will stay effective in this new regime. In Haringey the outcome is much less certain than in Enfield, where participation has established stronger roots.

There is considerable variation among the capacities of VCOs to contribute to the participation agenda as currently set up. Larger VCOs are more involved in the process, whilst smaller VCOs are at the coalface and find contributing to CEN/LSP structures more difficult, contributing to delivery will be even more challenging and some may decide not to become involved. There is an element of the "usual suspects" taking on leadership roles, either because they possess greater capacity, are more likely to be asked or elected, (because of their position) or because they possess an understanding of the "bigger picture." Specific barriers affecting VCOs capacity to participate include: time, staffing, information overload, differences in culture/ ways of working and lack of commitment. The "pool of talent" from which VCS representatives are drawn is still too narrow, and some VCOs self exclude.

There is still some confusion on the role VCO representatives are expected to play in structures, which is to be expected, but reveals a "training" need. There is evidence that the VCOs can evolve into their roles and are learning how to increase their effectiveness via training and self- learning. The next stages in this process are being devised by some active VCOs as the example of Enfield shows. But some localities may turn away from the CEN model of participation (Haringey), towards more individualised/ politicised models.

VCOs are being forced to be more "business- like," which is "squeezing out" some VCO players, especially smaller VCOs. There is a risk of the process becoming concentrated, and involving self- selectivity of a few larger voluntary groups, especially in the service delivery phase. The "Service Level Agreement" style of working requires additional strength and capacity that many do not possess, and cannot acquire. VCO

roles under contractual arrangements are becoming narrower. Many key informants fear loss of independence, credibility, identity, autonomy and innovativeness. Compromising existing roles, and no longer being seen as “alternative” deliverers (i.e. de-radicalisation) is seen as a real risk. The way forward in the next phase of “delivery participation” appears to be for CENs to intervene and consolidate small and medium-sized VCOs into consortiums. Haringey with its fragmented VCO sector and with the key organisation of the CEN compromised for credibility, is less advanced than Enfield in moving in this direction, so different “individually” driven political solutions are mooted.

The issues of governance and local conditions explored with the respondents will be discussed in the next (final) chapter where further evidence from the earlier stages will be brought in, to highlight issues of theoretical importance, tying in with the framework in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS: GOVERNANCE AND THE ROLE OF LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Original Contribution

This research represents a substantial and original contribution to knowledge because in certain key respects partnership working is under theorised. To date there is very little knowledge and explanatory theory about VCO involvement within regeneration partnerships, nor work comparing the outcomes of attempts to institutionalise the VCS in urban regeneration in different localities. An extensive search of the research literature revealed a gap in academic research on how partnerships go about selecting VCO partners, yet it is within this sector that issues of selection, accountability, representativeness and exclusion present themselves in the sharpest manner, as the need for community participation is now well accepted, and the need to focus on how to ensure effective community participation in practice moves centre-stage. VCO partners in regeneration partnerships are where the issue of selection arises, since the local authority normally must be involved with partnerships, while the private sector in a unique position has a different ethos towards partnership working and can choose to become involved. In contrast, the VCS may want to be part of a partnership, but may not be chosen, invited or judged reliable or appropriate. The theoretical models generated from this study are an original contribution to the knowledge base of the emerging field of partnership working and VCS participation in urban regeneration policy.

The results of this thesis also have direct policy relevance. Having accomplished a better understanding of the nature of the power imbalances that exist between the statutory organisations and the VCS in urban regeneration decision making processes, the type of changes required for more effective "community participation" in the policy process can be identified, and more appropriate solutions proposed. For example, ones which are more nuanced and respectful of local conditions. Therefore, this research has met a valuable need in the regeneration arena for practitioners, local government officials, VCO representatives and community consultants.

The nature of the research purposes determined a unique choice of research design in order to accommodate such analysis. The mixed method of research allowed analysis of discourses and power relationships both theoretically and empirically. It became apparent from the analysis of policy documents in Chapter 4 that documentary analysis could only take the study of power relationships in urban regeneration so far. It was necessary to go further and also adopt other research method techniques, namely, participant observation, questionnaires and semi structured interviews in order to identify how power was exercised on the ground and why the policy rhetoric was not being transferred into effective practice.

8.2 Methodological Observations and Reflections on Methodology

Before reviewing substantive findings, some comments on the methodologies used to generate these findings are appropriate, since “methodological learning” is also an important aim of a PhD.

I have deliberately used a succession of methods here, in a “staged sequence;” methods, which suited research into policy analysis and got deeper into the issues:

For example, (1) the review of published policy documents was used to establish the rationale/ aims of urban regeneration policy, and to identify how community participation emerged as a theme and the expectations that arose from it. This review of published policy documents set up the key questions for the thesis. (2) Participant observation of the process of setting up and early working of the infrastructure of participation in two case study areas, allowed insights into how policy was implemented and received locally. This revealed the value of a comparative approach and had an important role in establishing my own credibility with the “researched” subjects. (3) The questionnaire study went on to establish the scope and early experiences of VCO representatives in the participation process and their attitudes towards it and reasons why participation was not inclusive. This identified key issues and key players that required further investigation, and provided some broad conclusions of a quantitative nature. (4) Detailed interviews with experienced key VCO players (which were more like a dialogue) gave a deep insight into the evolution of participation as a process, and identified the role of local political cultures as an important factor conditioning the local forms and outcomes of participation, thus generating some new ideas. (5) In the

conclusions, the findings of the thesis are re-integrated into the theory, so that the thesis has theoretical as well as policy value.

This method of policy analysis is one that has focussed on the analysis of the policy process, as it has evolved and as it has been experienced by the key players (i.e. the VCO sector). As such it has avoided consideration of measured outcomes, evaluation against targets, considerations of efficiency, or “policy off” alternative scenarios, which may characterise some alternative approaches to policy analysis. As such it has much in common with “realistic evaluation” as advocated by e.g. Pawson & Tilley (1997). The value of the approach lies in the way it draws attention to how the interrelationship between “mechanism” and “context” determines outcomes. In this study, the “context” in which the CENs developed was shown to be a significant factor. In addition, the examination of “context” is important in order to establish the different characteristics of each case study area, which show significant variability even when situated in close spatial proximity. Similarities with this research and “realistic evaluation” can also be found in the examination of “mechanisms.” Thus, the focus on uncovering the experience and judgements of different types of VCOs represents an attempt to understand the mechanisms that determine the outcome of the policy process (e.g. their level of engagement as the process unfolded).

Despite this, it has to be said that there are particular problems of researching such a “fragmented” and sometimes suspicious sector. Practical difficulties of limited accessibility to specific contacts as a result of “gatekeepers” affected the initial research design, which subsequently resulted in revisiting the research questions and the data collection methods to answer these questions. For example, participant observations became a larger component of the research methodology than was initially anticipated because rapport needed to be established over a period of time before people would co-operate. VCO partners were often suspicious of “outsiders,” and have been wary of external bodies in the past.

The Community Empowerment Network Questionnaire was required because no “baseline” data of VCO experiences of CENs and relating LSPs existed in either case study area. However, the Community Empowerment Network Questionnaire was at the Steering Group of the ECEN for two months. After some initial anxiety it was subsequently agreed by the Steering Group and was circulated to all full members of

the ECEN, but only after I had presented the rationale of my research, together with details on the Community Empowerment Network Questionnaire and its uses at an ECEN meeting. In Haringey, a considerable amount of time was spent liaising with HarCEN's Co-ordinator, core office staff and the Chair of HarCEN in order for the questionnaire to be approved and circulated to HarCEN Members, again another illustration of the suspicious nature of the VCS. This was compounded by a low response rate to the postal Community Empowerment Network Questionnaire, which necessitated steps to increase the return rate. For example, a substantial number of questionnaires were completed via the telephone and in Haringey it was arranged to have a stall at the HarCEN Conference (Annual General Meeting), so that potential respondents could complete the questionnaire on site. Although, I was a known "participant," I was an objective one that offered a confidentiality promise an essential element in gaining co-operation in some cases. In essence one of the main advantages to this five- staged methodological process was achieving credibility, which later transposed into trust.

8.3 What has emerged by way of principal findings?

This thesis was driven by a number of research questions (see Chapter 1 p5) derived from policy literature, theoretical discussions and debates about current practice, which were refined and developed by encounter with primary data. These research questions have been answered in the various chapters of the thesis and a convenient way to present a summary of the key findings/ "answers" to these questions is to review each of the main research questions of the thesis in turn.

8.4 Governance Issues: Conceptualisation of the Third Sector in Local Governance

This section examines the broader picture within which Community Empowerment Networks are set and also uses the interview material to address some more theoretically interesting questions. The first of these concerns the issue of "governance." To what extent does the experience of VCO representatives with the participation agenda support the idea that a new model of local democracy is in the making, and does this new model carry the confidence of the key players it depends upon, namely the VCO sector? One could say that the account so far given of the

setting up a system of institutionalised participation for VCOs, which promises them a degree of influence in the shaping and delivery of urban regeneration policies is in itself evidence of a new shift to a form of "governance." The fact that many VCO representatives welcome and value this involvement (at least in Enfield, as noted earlier) further suggests that this new model of local democracy has a degree of acceptance. However this is not the full picture. In fact, some of the interviewees expressed reservations about the ideological basis of the "New Labour" community empowerment agenda, seeing it as part of the programme to "semi-privatise" public service provision/delivery, and change the role of the local authorities/public bodies by getting the VCO sector involved, either formally or by "picking up the pieces" in policy-difficult areas. For some it was *"just idea, after idea, expressed as an ideology of confusion"* (see Box 8.1). Reservations were more typical of Haringey participants with their scepticism of the process resulting in a greater likelihood for opting out.

Box 8.1: Reservations about the Ideological Basis of New Labour Urban Policy

"New Labour has an utterly Neo- Liberal agenda, which is about privatisation. I don't think they really want local authorities anymore - they certainly don't want them as service providers anymore. I think the ultimate aim for local authorities is just to be commissioning agents, and I think public services should be provided by publicly accountable bodies and not other agencies." HT2

"The first sector: the public and government drives the ideas. They see what they think are the solutions to problems. The second sector: the commercial sector is where they get all the money from to do their work. The third sector: the voluntary and community sector seems to be picking up the pieces when everything is in a mess from what they have done. It is quite clear that we are picking up all the issues in mental health, ASBOs, teenage pregnancies and sexuality. We are constantly picking up the pieces and because we do it voluntarily, cheaply, they still carry on producing crazy ideas." HT4

"The fact that New Labour has not really thought these issues through, and just had knee-jerk reactions to them as soon as something goes wrong is worrying. I certainly don't feel confident that nationally, we are progressing towards a vibrant voluntary sector in the future. I feel quite fearful for some of the smaller groups, and even more fearful that if we do lose the smaller groups what will happen in terms of race relations and racial harmony within boroughs. I'm quite worried for the future of the sector." HT3

Some participant's felt the pace of change was being forced too much by government interests and not the VCO sector itself. There were suspicions of "formalising" the VCO role too much, rendering it less effective and revealing divisions within the VCO sector. Consequently, it would appear that of all the different rationales for third sector participation within the New Labour agenda, it is the narrow service delivery agenda, which has come to dominate in practice, which is actually viewed with most suspicion by the VCO sector. The VCS would like to be recognised for its own traditional strengths, which should not be abandoned in pursuit of the new government driven agenda. Many would prefer to retain their independence and not be "required" to co-operate. But this is hard when government is often the major source of funding. The

turning point for many in the voluntary sector has been around “professionalising” the sector, since the sector needed to be “professional” in order to participate in the new agenda. But VCO participants were quick to point out that they were not made more “professional” by the New Labour agenda. In fact some believed the agenda is nothing new (see Box 8.2) and the participatory mechanisms are not enhancing their influence significantly at all.

The possibility of a change in government raises some interesting insights, as many participants felt LSPs/ CENs are likely to disappear if the government changed. As one respondent stated: *“Are CENs here to stay? Are they time limited? A change in political party, and it could be all change, once more.”* This raises key issues as to how permanently embedded voluntary and community organisations participation is in urban policy and how indispensable Community Empowerment Networks are as a mechanism for participation? In this respect a key question is what value is added that could not be achieved by some other mechanism?

Box 8.2: Cooperative Agenda offering Nothing New

“There is nothing that they are trying to create for the voluntary sector that the voluntary sector hasn't done before. The voluntary sector has been working with these client groups that they have only just identified from day one. It is about time the voluntary sector sat down and came up with their own agenda, with or without fund-raising to do it. We need to identify where we want to go rather than following someone else's agenda. The voluntary sector should not rely on this new relationship to map out its future plans.” HT5

“It is something that the voluntary sector was always doing (consulting), rather than it being something that New Labour has introduced, there just weren't these formal structures, and in my experience people dislike all these formal structures and don't want to be involved in all that.” ET10

Taken together the two points above suggest that though it may be fair to characterise the engagement of the VCS with urban regeneration via structures such as CENs and LSPs as evidence of a “shift to governance”, this is not a shift that is uncontested by some key players (VCO representatives) engaged in it, who remain sceptical about central state motives in orchestrating it, and unconvinced it represents a true transfer of power and about its longevity.

A more theoretically driven account of the shift of power outwards and downwards towards the VCS in current local regeneration policy was provided in Chapter 2. This involved representing the shift as one from local government to local governance. To return to this account, we can say that while the transition from local government to local governance is well recognised, there is no certainty as to how best to

conceptualise this change, particularly the emerging role of the state. The evidence of this thesis is that it is in fact, paradoxical, because on the one hand, though self-governing networks are seen as the key instrument of governance, on the other hand, the state is often seen to remain the key actor in governance by the virtue of the vast resources it still controls and its ability to control the direction of evolution of the process of participation. The thesis also revealed that the broad networks that are created between government and non-government actors diffuse lines of accountability and control, so it is difficult to know who makes the decisions and where the power lies, a confusion, even shared by the actors in the process.

To return to the three different models of “community governance,” expressed in Chapter 2 (see Table 2.3) we can say, in Haringey “community governance” can be described as “citizen governance,” as VCOs were essentially suspicious of “government orientated” models, preferring to seek alternatives to the CEN/LSP structures and some VCOs, where possible avoided “formalised” participation. In Enfield “community governance” can perhaps be described as “local governance,” using Sullivan’s (2003) model, expressed in Chapter 2 (see Table 2.3), as VCO participation was provided via a “formalised” CEN network and their voice(s) have been listened to by key local authority officers. But the extent to which VCOs were actually “enabled” to influence the agenda (in both case studies) varied considerably according to age, size and type of sector and at different tiers of the participatory system.

The thesis also involved theorising the nature of power and subsequently identifying the way in which the third sector interplays with several themes of local governance, e.g. local democracy, representation, accountability and power relations. Here, a theoretical framework was devised showing the connections between different forms of power and the phases of local governance, which went on to influence some of the research questions of the thesis. Subsequently, I intend to revisit this theoretical framework in light of the research findings to suggest how local conditions mediate ways in which power is locally exercised, and create contrasting forms of governance in particular places. In other words the transition to governance, is taking place unevenly, even in the common field of regeneration policy. This theme is developed in the section on governance, political subculture and models of power later in this chapter.

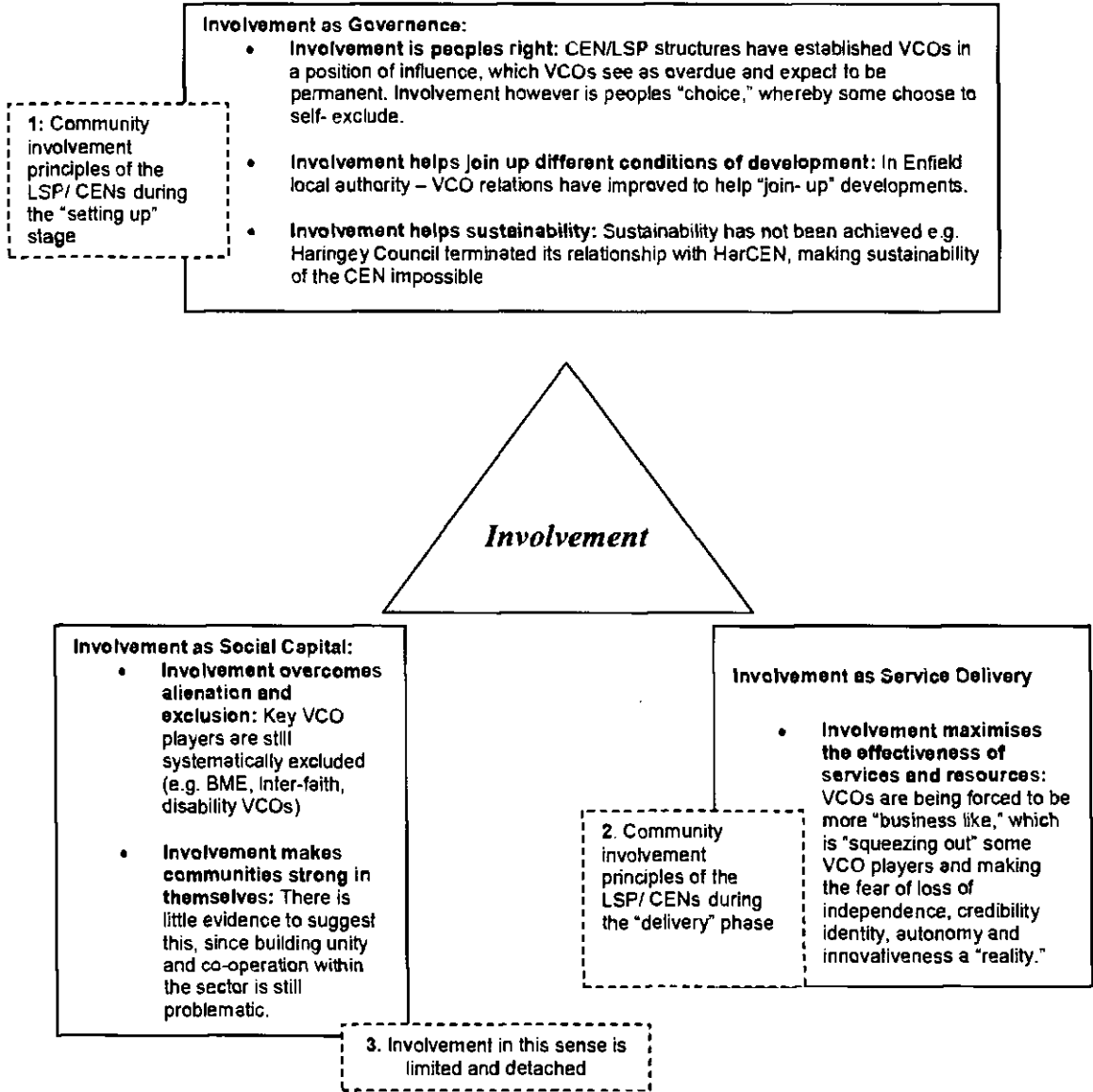
8.5 The Nature and Extent of Community and Voluntary Sector Participation in Urban Policy

The nature and extent of VCO participation in urban regeneration policy, is somewhat dependant on the contrasting discourses that underpin urban policy and some of the contradictions that surround this emerging urban policy framework. The evolution (nature, extent and purpose) of urban policy and VCS participation in urban policy, is an ongoing "process", that requires reference to the broader political and economic changes driving policy. The thesis identified four main phases in the political arena; the social democratic consensus, urban entrepreneurialism, the competitive bidding paradigm and the third way consensus and examined the contrasting discourses, definitions, and examined policy principles of "community" and "community involvement" that underpin urban policy under the third way consensus of New Labour. This illustrated that the involvement of the VCS, particularly within partnerships had begun well before New Labour came to power in 1997. It also drew out the changing partnership structures from the corporatist approach of the 1970s, and, the bilateral partnerships of the 1980s to the multi-sectoral partnerships rooted in the competitive bidding paradigm and the third way consensus. HarCEN/HSP and ECEN/ESP (the case studies at the core of this thesis) are exemplars of this. The thesis also revealed that the key policy documents taking a community focus under the third way consensus vary in their community principles/ aims (in terms of whether they have a governance, social capital or service delivery focus) and in their discourses of community (whether they are a geographical, policy or moral construction). The balance between these was strongly influenced by which government departments had drawn up these policies.

It is important here to return to the six forms of "community involvement" identified by Chanan (2003), which were documented in Chapter 4. This is so as to identify what type of community involvement the CENs have developed (and indeed not developed). Movement over time has meant that community involvement principles around "social capital" have become excluded and detached. By their very nature LSPs are bound up with "governance" based community involvement, but as LSPs/ CENs move from a "setting up" stage towards "everyday" running of programmes and projects, "service delivery" community involvement takes precedence. The point here is to modify the basic conceptual diagram of Chapter 2 (Figure 4.1) to emphasise the importance of the

“community involvement” principles that have been achieved through CENs/LSPs (Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1: Community Involvement Objectives of the CENs/ LSPs
Source: Adapted from Chanan (2003) p21



The critical discourse section of the thesis argued that urban regeneration is in many ways a “test-bed” for wider ideas about local governance and social policy. Attempts have clearly been made to incorporate the community more generally within a range of urban policies, but urban regeneration is at the forefront. However, a number of contradictions/difficulties emerge including community participation being seen as good

for its own sake, as well as an assumption it will produce better outcomes. Yet there are dangers of involving the “community,” not least given the considerable dispute/ disagreement as to what it is. The discourses and definitions of community vary according to different government departments, while the intentions of policy become simplified and diluted as ideas translate into outcomes. There has been a return to community involvement in policy terms, but how does it differ from previously? It can be argued that the references made to “engaging and involving,” local communities in urban policy marks a return to the “culture of poverty” view held during the 1960s. This new, urban policy has in fact gone full circle and is neither as new nor as innovative as some policy documents claim. It raises the question as to whether we are expecting too much from deprived communities in inviting their “participation” in policy-making and delivery and whether too many assumptions about ability, motivation and shared values are being made.

8.6 VCO Experiences of Community Empowerment Networks and Local Strategic Partnerships

8.6.1 Establishing the Strategic Infrastructure and Setting Agendas and Priorities

In the empirical research, the thesis concentrated on two CENs and their relationship to their respective LSPs in particular, as “test- beds” in, which ongoing attempts to involve the VCS in urban regeneration policy could be critically questioned, and associated theoretical issues explored. This involved case study research that entailed participant observation, questionnaires and semi-structured interviewing. The key substantive findings of the thesis are reviewed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. The thesis specifically examined via participant observations how the strategic infrastructure of CENs had been created and established in the study areas and the way in which agendas and priorities for VCOs were created and established at a variety of different levels (CEN, Thematic Partnerships and LSP). It examined the way in which VCOs were delivering policy initiatives, in order to anticipate the extent to which the policy objectives expressed in Chapter 4 were being met and realised. This identified some key issues for more detailed exploration, which was done by looking at the experience and opinions of a broad set of VCO representatives via a questionnaire survey in Chapter 6, and sharing the considered views of key VCO players in Chapter 7 via semi- structured

interviewing. The account of the way the policy was implemented in both the boroughs studied does show it as a contested political process with local outcomes determined by local political structures and practices, and not a uniformly implemented “linear model,” where results are likely to be the same in every location where it is attempted. Some of the key findings to emerge are restated below, as these bear upon the originally stated aims of the thesis.

8.6.2 Active Participation in CEN Structures

The thesis examined the characteristics and experiences of the VCO respondents in terms of the type of VCOs that “actively” participate in CENs and those that do not, the experiences of VCO CEN representatives in terms of clarity of role, views on CEN workings and the relationship between the VCS and statutory bodies at the LSP level. These results showed a strong correlation with many of the findings of the NAO (2004), as these findings also revealed that:

- CENs could do more to enhance their influence on LSPs
- Greater transparency to local partners and the community were required from CENs regarding their working practices
- Holding public events in deprived neighbourhoods raised community involvement and funding the VCS built the confidence of community groups
- Community and public sector members still had to manage tensions over trust and power

However, in the sample studied here there was some debate as to whether the CENs actually reflected the views of the community and whether the CENs had too little influence on the main boards of the LSPs. For Haringey, timing problems regarding the setting up of HarCEN was thought to have compromised the CEN’s credibility and damaged VCO trust in the LSP, a factor that influenced the subsequent evolution of participation practices in the borough. It also revealed that though most VCOs themselves were strongly committed to the participation agenda and valued being part of the process, they were not unaware of limits on their own influence, and where power still resides. Interestingly, we could infer from the survey that VCOs were perhaps less concerned with establishing benefits from participation in terms of

measured outputs than with the benefits to be gained from the act of participation. For them (at least at this setting up stage when expectations were at their highest), the process not the product was what counted. All VCOs felt they should be involved, and valued the opportunities for networking and building up their own expertise (i.e. social capital) implicit in the process of participation, at both CEN and LSP levels. There was also some evidence to suggest that participation remains incomplete as to sector, size and age of the VCO sector. The BME community in particular remain largely absent from the process, and among the least convinced about the value of it.

8.6.3 Levels of Influence

The thesis examined the “embedded influence” of VCOs within the two case study CENs/LSPs, the “evolving” nature of the participation process and the “capacities” of VCO representation and the contribution this has on their level of power/ influence in the decision making process. The author went on to develop a “Typology of Engagement,” in Chapter 7, which included the respondents of the two case studies, which demonstrated four different types of VCO participants: leaders, learners, limited engagers and alternative strategizers/ self- excluders (see Table 7.3). The thesis also examined the perceived implications that the impending shift from grant aid to tendering, commissioning and procurement (i.e. service delivery type roles) would have on the VCS. This revealed that though the principles and practice of community participation are indeed embedded in current urban policy, it is questionable as to whether it is as yet robust, since some VCO players have reservations about their roles as participation moves on from “consultation and influence” to “active delivery”. Overall, one could say that participation has been unevenly achieved, at some cost of extra burdens on VCO players, and with reservations about future roles. And in terms of existing structures, although the CENs are seen as important vehicles for participation there are reservations on their impact so far, with them still to influence actual outcomes. The “Thematic Groups” are the level at which most tangible impact over policy content and policy priorities have been achieved by VCOs.

8.6.4 Capacities and Evolution of VCO Representation

The thesis has communicated a strong sense that the structures for participation are still in evolution, as participants learn about the potential of the system and gain

experience. This indicates that the various ladders of participation set out by Arnstein (1969), Burns *et al* (1994) and Thomas (1995) in Chapter 1 should in fact be seen as a “process,” not a set of separate classes but (as my own typology of engagement demonstrated) this is not a “unidirectional” process. Consequently, in this respect a ladder is not a good metaphor, Anderson (1995) used the metaphor of a children’s adventure apparatus as being more appropriate in order to illustrate that movement can take place upwards and downwards and in multiple directions. Enfield in particular has established a pattern of review, evolution and learning which has increased VCO confidence in the system set up, and has led to more effective outcomes and positive expectations. A learning culture is recognised and an effective “bureaucracy of participation” has been established in Enfield, which has helped to embed the idea and practices of VCO participation in that borough. However, the attempt to create a formal process of VCO involvement can be seen as counter-productive if it is done badly as in Haringey’s case. In this borough “positive evolution” is not apparent, at least not within the formal structures of VCO incorporation. It could be argued that VCO activity in Haringey may be quite vital, but much of this is taking place outside of formalised structures such as CEN’s

The thesis clearly showed that there was considerable variation among the capacities of VCOs to contribute to the participation agenda. Larger VCOs were more involved in the process, whilst smaller VCOs busy at the frontline, found contributing to CEN/LSP structures more difficult. Arguably, contributing to actual policy delivery (the future agenda) will be even more challenging for smaller VCOs and some may decide not to attempt it, rather withdrawing from participation. There is an element of the “usual suspects” taking on active leadership roles, either because they possess greater capacity, are more likely to be asked or elected, (because of their position), or because they possess the commitment towards the “bigger picture.” Specific barriers affecting VCOs capacity to participate included: time, staffing, information overload, differences in culture/ ways of working and lack of commitment. The “pool of talent” from which VCS representatives are drawn is still quite narrow, and some VCOs self exclude. There is still some confusion on the role VCO representatives are expected to play in structures, which is to some extent to be expected, but reveals a “training” need. There is evidence that the VCOs can evolve into their roles and are learning how to increase their effectiveness via training and self- learning and the next stages in this process are

already being devised by some active VCOs as the example of Enfield showed. But some VCOs may in fact be turning away from the CEN model of participation (as seen in Haringey), towards more individualised/ politicised and informal models. Some of these findings have implications for improving the design and conduct of “participation policy” as will be discussed later.

8.6.5 New Roles in Service Delivery

One conclusion of the thesis is that the current models of participation are encouraging VCOs to be more “business- like,” which is “squeezing out” some VCO players, especially smaller ones, confirming an anxiety of some other researchers (e.g. Peck & Tickell, 2007). There is a risk of the process becoming concentrated, and involving self-selectivity of a few larger voluntary groups, especially in the service delivery phase. The “Service Level Agreement” style of working requires additional strength and capacity (demands) that many do not possess, and cannot acquire. VCO roles under contractual arrangements are becoming narrower. Many key informants fear loss of independence, credibility, identity, autonomy and innovativeness. Compromising existing roles, no longer being seen as “alternative” deliverers (i.e. a de-radicalisation process) is seen as a real risk. The apparent way forward in the next phase of “delivery participation” is perhaps for CENs to intervene and consolidate small and medium-sized VCOs into consortiums. Haringey with its fragmented VCO sector and with the key organisation of the CEN somewhat compromised for credibility, is less advanced than Enfield in moving in this direction, so different “individually” driven political solutions are mooted in this borough. This provides further evidence that the outcomes of the participation experiments, though beginning with similar intensions and structures, can be very different in different local settings. In fact in Haringey the local authority is no longer recognising HarCEN.

8.7 The Importance of the Political Subculture and Local Conditions

It has been apparent in Chapter 7 that distinct contrasts exist between Enfield and Haringey in the way that the infrastructure for community participation in policy delivery have been set up, in the ways in which participation is practised and is evolving and in the extent to which positive outcomes can be judged. In this Chapter this contrast is

described more theoretically as reflecting differences in the political subculture in each locality. The argument is that local communities and conditions affect policy implementation and outcomes, even when that policy has been devised according to a national template. I ask how and why does this local political culture make a difference, and how can it be represented theoretically?

Local conditions/circumstances (place and time) creates political subcultures which impacts upon how/what groups are brought into the participation process, and in turn the contribution they make to shaping participation and the effectiveness of decisions/outcomes. To characterise this in theoretical terms, one could say that Haringey presents aspects of an *agonistic political subculture* i.e. their quarrelsome behaviour and fractious nature is what distinctively defines and characterises the conduct of politics in the borough. In fact, respondents do recognise this and can describe it. Gender, race, faith, and religion “get in the way” of delivering policy in a co-operative and consensual manner in Haringey. This is a potentially useful way to characterise Haringey, as it helps make sense of the outcomes of attempted participation in Haringey. Despite attempts at a rational approach initially (in particular to the setting up of the CEN), rivalry has subsequently been to the fore. In fact it has been made worse by a clumsy management of participation bodies that did not recognise the subtleties or strains in the political subculture of the Borough. In contrast, in Enfield, the political subculture is perhaps best described as more *bureaucratic* on both the local authority and VCO sides. This made the practices of consultation and participation perhaps easier, because what was proposed and set up was essentially a system for participation in the form of rule-based, consensus seeking bodies that the various players could understand and relate to. Although many still have reservations about the future direction of the agenda, the setting up process and the early conduct of participation was quite compatible with the way of “doing things” in Enfield. In Enfield, the CEN’s relative success seems to be due to the forming of an effective alliance between the council officers and VCO managers (i.e. a coalition of professionals), which demonstrated effective participation.

Of course it is understood that wider “socio- economic” factors and circumstances influence the local political culture of Enfield and Haringey. For example, in Chapter 4 Marinetto (1999) described this as his third level: *“the world outside of policy*

institutions," (i.e. the external forces impinging upon the policy process and the impact of uneven economic development which are beyond the immediate control of policy agents, influencing priorities, programmes and agendas). The local political culture, though used here as an "explanatory factor" is itself a product of a set of circumstances, locally and historically specific, which include migration, ethnic and demographic diversity etc and (on the economic side) the legacy of industrial structure and the current economic mix. The trajectory of VCO development is also rooted within these wider socio-economic factors and cannot be understood just with reference to the "formal" policy process. This suggests the need to develop any account of "participation" strategy firmly within an understanding of local socio/ economic realities. For example, the differences in Enfield and Haringey reflect the different challenges that Haringey faces, which come from having a more diverse population; a more transient/ rapidly changing population (see Appendix E); and a more "deprived" population. Of course all of these issues also exist in Enfield, but they exist on a far greater scale in Haringey. For example, in the indices of deprivation 2004 Haringey ranked 13th most deprived, whilst Enfield ranked 104th most deprived, out of 354 local authority areas in England. The transience of the population leads to a problem of establishing long term working relationships and well established groups and there will be more new, younger, smaller groups, which (as my results show) are least likely to be involved in CENs and formal structures. Therefore, it is important to note that though I am using "local political culture" as a factor explaining why/how the VCO participation agenda turns out differently in different areas, At a deeper level this "local political culture" is itself a "contingent variable", something that can be explained by other factors. It has an origin somewhere, which certainly can be theorised, though doing so is not my aim nor is it necessary to the thesis.

In this context, what is interesting is that all respondents showed awareness that "local circumstances" shape the timing, form and outcomes of the VCO participation process, and that in Haringey this has taken the form of recognising that a history of conflicts, confusion of roles and disappointments, leading to a rethink of the extent of participation by some of the VCOs, are outcomes that are not necessarily repeated elsewhere. Respondents do indeed paint a picture of one borough where the project to incorporate the VCO sector more formally and thoroughly into urban regeneration policy shaping and delivery has worked well so far (Enfield), and one borough where it

has worked less well (Haringey). This is not an issue of “success or failure”, rather a question of the extent to which a centrally driven policy process has been adapted into local conditions resulting in different outcomes. One can identify several factors and circumstances that account for this, which relate back to the theoretical description of an “agonistic” versus a “bureaucratic” locality as the defining difference.

For example, the late start in Haringey, the confusion of roles and responsibilities between HarCEN and HAVCO, (which stemmed from having two “leadership” bodies with no clarity of role between them, even a latent rivalry) played a part. Plus the leadership style and poor management practice that seemed to characterise HarCEN early on, meant it lost credibility and trust with some VCOs. Subsequently continuing poor working practices seemed to leave some VCOs feeling overwhelmed with information, while the local government bureaucracy has not helped to extend the role/influence of the CEN. Numerous respondents shared this view: *“There has been a failure to fully engage the wider community. The Haringey CEN looked good on paper with a fairly mixed membership and fairly different from HAVCO. However, most were not sufficiently involved. Others were only really engaged when money was at stake. There was insufficient spread of representatives on theme groups, a fairly weak communication to members on a regular basis and a lack of training and empowerment to community representatives, many of who were ‘self appointed’. They only needed affirming e.g. at elections with quite a low number of votes etc.” (HT10)*. The fact that the CEN in Haringey was introduced into a political culture that was already characterised by conflict, and even suspicion is a point worth emphasising, as a respondent made the point: *“For sure groups liked a measure of ‘independence’ to run the CEN, though there is an air of anarchy within the sector as well as not sharing/inviting information from a ‘core’” (HT10)* (see Box 8.3).

Box 8.3: Confrontational Politics characterise a Borough

"We had a bullying Council: So they were totally entrenched as a Labour council and had a certain hierarchy. We called them the Haringey Mafia, because basically that is how they treated us: we were totally put down by them, they put down their agenda and that was it." HT4

"Haringey has always appeared to have been fairly chaotic, because it was so overloaded with people that had the same political agenda: it was a Labour government local council. Now it is almost 50-50 (Labour-Liberal Democrat), so things will have to change." HT2

"They are calling the shots they want to be betrayed as a caring council. The politics there is very sensitive. We have had problems with the politics of the Council. They are schemers. A bad majority doesn't make for good government. They (Labour) were doing things in the way they wanted and accountability was zero." HT1

"You still have your pockets of good politicians, but I have heard some politicians talking about the voluntary sector that haven't got a clue about what the voluntary sector actually does." HT3

"How can you have effectively empowered the community, when behind it is the local authority, you can see why HarCEN wanted to be independent from them, but it is not healthy." ET5

Although Haringey actually has a long tradition of VCO activity in politics this did not help the formalisation of this role via the CEN. This may reflect the fact that the council is politically less inclined towards consensus seeking, and traditionally more dominant than in Enfield, and local politics is confrontational and not necessarily expressed in the language of the "community's" interests. Indeed, participants saw potential conflict of "Council" verses "community." That half of the councillors lost their seats and a return of a former council leader demonstrates a deeper political instability. There is an impression in the community that Haringey Council is not "actively engaging communities." They seem not to listen to the opinions of the sector and the sector feels it does not have enough of a voice and is willing to state this openly and aggressively.

The VCO claimed to detect an attitude of apprehension within the local authority in Haringey when it came to formalising participation. They saw the Council as not knowing what they were inviting into the partnership and therefore suspicious of it, and while the local authority may have not wanted to see confrontational participation, they seemed unable to deliver consensual participation based on collaboration, coordination, liaison and communication. This culture in Haringey initially hindered the working of the CEN, and the CEN did not get into the dialogue process either. It was established on this "foundation of aggression" rather than participation and integration, which is the historical reality in Haringey, (see Box 8.4), and has not moved the local political culture on from this. The Council's apparent disrespect/disregard for groups that they are supposed to be listening to effectively created people "shouting at them" and the impact of that (in the view of the VCO representatives) was that the people able

to shout, would succeed and those that were not able to shout would get more isolated. In addition, HAVCO grew out of the failure of another organisation, the CVS Voluntary Action Haringey (VAH). Thus the agenda from the start was that somebody has “failed:” you have got to come in and remedy it from above. The Council set up HAVCO, but then HarCEN came on board as part of the national government initiative (via GOL). 2-3 years on, the playing field changed again, and the management of CENs has gone back to the Council. So now the council in effect runs the CEN and oversees HAVCO, a return to a “dominant” council, in institutionalised conflict with a VCO sector that feels undervalued, not a respected partner.

Box 8.4: Foundation of Aggression in Local Politics

“There are still a lot of people that are coming from the agenda that whatever you say is going to be wrong, because that is how it has always been, it is historical, it is going to affect us and what we do, it is going to cost us whatever you do. Therefore, we are going to attack it immediately, because that is the way we have learnt to do it. And that is how you have always dealt with us. Widening capacity of people to get their voices heard is definitely what I have experienced in Haringey.” HT4

“It is depressing and disappointing, but a reality.” HT5

8.7.1 Returning to Theory: Agonistic Politics under the Spotlight

“Deliberative democracy” and “agonistic democracy” are seen by political theorists as “new” forms of democratic theory and practice, (new in contrast to the traditional “majoritarian” democracy), which may now be competing for attention in “post- liberal” society (see Table 8.1). The contemporary politics of New Labour can be characterised as an attempt to introduce “discursive deliberative democracy” (which might be seen as a model of “governance”), but some see this as underplaying or misreading the true nature of politics in a heterogeneous constituency, where deep- seated communities, new communities and self-conscious communities have their own agenda and will be characterised by the confrontation that goes with that (Amin, 2004). In this interpretation, any move towards a liberal rational approach in the form and content of politics, and attempts to base politics around “*collective identities*” denies antagonism, and fails to recognize that there will always be “*discord*.” In addition, it ignores the fact that actors in the process who are drawn from different ethnic groups have different understandings of democratic politics, which is a matter of constant negotiation, not necessarily ending in consensual agreement. As Amin (2002) states:

"All these factors combined to form a civic space of vibrant opposition and negotiation – without question one full of power play and jostling between vested interests - but open to the discursive clashes of distributed citizenship" (p973)

Table 8.1: Different attitudes towards Democratic Politics

Traditional Politics	Agonistic Politics
Institutionalized in political parties	Characterized by the way in which conflict is handled/ resolved
Round- table consensus (broadly based and rational)	Uncompromising Confrontation is always present Adversaries are not denied
De-personalized	Conflict is left unresolved
Acceptance even if do not agree	The opposition to a decision does not stop
Passion and identity ignored Collective identities	Acceptance of complexity and difference Acceptance of different ways of working
	More likely present in a multi-cultural global city where the depth and number of identities and unwillingness to share power in anyway resides

Synthesized from Jelloun, 2005, Mouffe, 2006, Amin & Thrift, 2005, Amin 2002

We have seen from the interview analysis that the micro politics of place determine the terms of local community engagement. A progressive place politics, such as that in Haringey is one that needs to draw on an "agonistic"²¹ political culture. This is a culture that values participatory and open-ended engagement but one based on the "*clash of democratic political positions*" (Mouffe, 2000, p104) or what Berlin cited in Mouffe (2000) calls an "*uneasy equilibrium between competing values*." It is not really a consensus seeking, co-operative politics, which is the model of political behaviour assumed by the CEN/LSP style of orchestrated participation. Agonistic politics is a non-majoritarian "talk-centric style" of decision making, which believes in the constitutive power of disagreement, instead of a "voting-centric style." The key words of agonistic politics (if we are being optimistic about its possibilities) are open and critical debate, and mutual awareness, rather than trust, consensus and cohesion that dominate the Communitarian position (Amin, 2002). The argument here is that this agonistic dimension cannot be made to disappear simply by denying it or wishing it away and it is illusory to believe that it can be eradicated e.g. by incorporation into co-operative or participatory structures imposed from "above," such as a CEN, which tend to rely on finding and delivering consensus, or on getting participants to deliver an agreed agenda

²¹ Essentially, an "agonist" is a person engaged in a conflict or struggle, whilst the term "agonistic" refers to a dialectical approach, which is combative; striving to overcome in argument and pertaining to a range of activities associated with confrontational encounters, (including threat, attack, appeasement or retreat).

of work. Indeed too much emphasis on consensus, together with an aversion towards confrontation, may instead produce apathy and a lack of interest in participation from those expected to participate, leading to a withdrawal from structures and a reversion to other forms of influence seeking, which we have seen in both case study areas, but especially Haringey (Jelloun, 2005, Mouffe, 2006, Amin & Thrift, 2005).

In the particular case of Haringey the “antagonism and conflict” or “*struggle between adversaries*” (i.e. friendly enemies) can be found between HarCEN and HAVCO, between Haringey’s VCS and the council, between some of the VCOs themselves, and also in the council’s attempts to maintain its dominant position in policy- making and delivery vis-à-vis the VCOs (i.e. not to give away power) and subsequently in the withdrawal of some Haringey VCOs from the CEN/LSP in favour of more direct political activity. Theorists say that agonistic rights and duties are basically about *individuation* in matters of identity interpretation and cultural meaning; (a) rights to critical *contestation* and (b) duties of moral integrity and innovative *competition* (Jelloun, 2005). Thus, agonism may well leave conflicts and disagreements unresolved, which is the nature of bringing varied and opposed individuals together, but its strengths lies in making transparent reasons for resentment and misunderstanding, so that future encounters can build on a better foundation (Amin, 2002). The CEN structures devised by central government and their consultants do not recognize this and so are likely to be difficult to introduce smoothly into an “agonistic political culture.” Such structures are designed on an assumption of willingness to work to rules, to collaborate and to seek consensus on policy priorities and to agree to a “professionalised” style of working in policy design and delivery, all notions somewhat inimical to Haringey’s agonistic political culture, even if present in other locations in London.

8.7.2 Haringey’s “Agonistic” Traits v Enfield’s “Good Bureaucracy”

Participants admit (without necessarily using the term) that this tense “agonistic” style is a traditional part of Haringey’s political culture, and chaotic confrontation is actually seen by many as a “healthy” part of the local political process with certain benefits to this approach to politics. For example, one respondent commented: “*It appears messy, but in a way more effective, because everyone is given the opportunity to voice their opinions.*” Some “good” characterisations of such politics can be found in Box 8.5.

Interestingly, it is thought by respondents that this "agonistic" culture is particularly characteristic of places that are almost entirely made up of small VCOs, because there is more in common between organisations in terms of size than there is in sector. In some respects smaller organisations in Haringey have more in common with a small private business, whilst the big VCOs have more in common with the public sector and even large private firms than with smaller VCOs (see Box 8.6). There was also awareness among participants of the radical/faith and ethnic basis of "group" politics in Haringey, which can make them rather uncompromising and single-minded. This political culture pervades the terms of local debates and sets the tone, but also leads to a "polarised" local politics (see Box 8.7).

Box 8.5: Agonistic Politics typifies Haringey

"I think Haringey people are quite gobby, they have got a lot to be angry about. They will try their best to be heard, it is not a quiet meeting that you would hold, that is for sure." HT8

"The chaos side is reflected in Haringey. In Haringey, voluntary organisations will be at meetings, and want to say something and will oppose things. Where as in other boroughs, you see this ethos of "well that's the agenda, so we won't say anything, we won't fight it." Haringey organisations very much fight the rubber-stamping of things." HT4

"The voluntary sector in Haringey, will contradict if they want to. In Haringey, when something needs to be said, it is still said, despite the hand that feeds you. What we are not good at is saying it together. We are one of the better community led boroughs." HT3

"In Haringey confrontation is a mechanism that is used to be heard, or to exert some kind of influence." HT6

Box 8.6: Conflicts between VCOs are typical in Haringey

"It is a culture of confusion, not knowing, who is doing what and the difference between HAVCO and HarCEN not being clear. It is pretty divisive, in the sense that there are so many little tiny organisations all fighting for the same stuff or they think they are fighting for the same stuff. There is a sense of being quite against each other." HT7

"Conflict between different community groups is very prevalent within Haringey. It is going to be extremely difficult because it is these conflicts, which are preventing consortiums from being set up, because trust does not exist between such groups." HT5

"There is a lack of co-operation between community groups in Enfield, but more striking in Haringey. In Enfield, it is subtle, because no one wants to be seen as inhibiting or not liking another voluntary sector group." ET5

Box 8.7: Antagonism and Ethnicity

"I think the black faith community has disproportionate power within the local authority. They are usually males that have been elected and actually the notable ones are black in Haringey. It has certainly got the biggest belief in God that I have ever experienced in any area at all. I would be very reluctant to take some of those policies to some of those environments." HT8

"We have a black population with a high crime rate. So what we get is a white population that tries to escape before their kids go to secondary school, which is quite ridiculous, and in doing so, it removes the balance. Faith based schools are also big in Haringey. So we end up with this population that has become quite radicalised because they are the ones that have been left behind." HT8

"The 'West African' faction on the board became more distrusting of the chair, though they took a long time to put their case. I also think some of their mistrust resulted from a fall out between the now former Chair and the former CEO, who had a huge influence on HarCEN." HT10

"It is fragmented: not based on party lines. It is focused around faith groups and black communities -the Afro-Caribbean black communities." HT8

It is however, pointed out by some that this "agonistic" culture can be problematic.

Some recognise a need to evolve into a more consensual style of politics, as confrontation is not the best way forward if partnership is to work. Participation needs to be done at both these fronts (i.e. welcoming involvement and addressing apprehension, uncertainty and scepticism) or otherwise it will inhibit participation elsewhere along the route (see Box 8.8). In this sense, an "agonistic" political culture is not forever inimical to the formal "institutionalised" participation agenda of New Labour, but is perhaps a difficult environment in which to establish it successfully, and where initially problems may well be more apparent than progress.

Box 8.8: Antagonism: the Best Way Forward?

"We must not alianate or make the other party stand on the opposite side - as partners, we are "critical friends" and we need to just do that rather than sheer confrontation all of the time." HT6

"I do not think this antagonistic nature is the best way forward: we need to go into dialogue of co-operation and connection, not antagonism. In terms of antagonism it is good that we are willing and able to stand up for our rights, but it would be good to have both sides: to be able to understand that dialogue is not about either side standing up for their rights, but about both sides having their rights. The sense of negotiation, and that we are both in it together." HT4

In contrast, Enfield respondents seemed to describe a very different local political culture to the "active face-to-face" politics of Haringey, which engenders a different set of political skills and which is (on the evidence of this research), a more favourable setting for the "New Labour" model of participation- based discourse. There was a perception that Enfield had moved further into the community participation agenda than Haringey, and was more effective as a result. Thus council officers have accepted the VCO role in Enfield. The political culture included an adaptable and professional group of local authority officers, who found little difficulty in co-operating with professional

managers/leaders from the VCO sector when required to do so in the new regime. It seemed most local players saw it as delivering an acceptable central government agenda, which they approved of rather than resisted. In Enfield, the political culture adopted very quickly, since it was used to a top-down, traditional/ conservative approach of "working to orders" within a "good bureaucracy" (see Box 8.9). The political class (councillors) seemed to express "benign indifference," rather than seeing VCO involvement as a threat, which allowed the new structures time to bed in and develop an established/useful role. ECEN also proved effective in establishing its inclusivity and effectiveness early on, and subsequently by adapting its ways of working (e.g. through thematic groups) it gave participating VCOs a feeling of focus and usefulness and gained credibility by being both helpful and professional in its participation. Given an efficient political culture at officer level (see Box 8.10), with mutual respect between professionals, co-operative working is clearly happening, though it must be said it is still at the level of larger VCOs (small and true community groups are less involved).

Box 8.9: "Good Bureaucracy"

I think it always has been a top-down approach. It is more like a "please sir can I have some more" situation and you go cap in hand." ET6

"Enfield is quite a curious place. It always seems a bit behind the times to me." ET9

"Enfield, councillors have had it tough with them going out and Conservatives coming in, and it becoming very much more bureaucratic. Enfield is perhaps more docile: So whether it is if you go further out or whether it is where you have much more focused or stronger councils, which make it more difficult for people to or allow people to have a voice or a platform on which to do so." HT4

Though some Enfield VCO's (e.g. in health care and disability) which had a prior history of working with statutory bodies were not always convinced that the new CEN structure added real value to their work (even seeing it as an extra layer of bureaucracy) they did appreciate its value for the wider VCO sector, and expect its useful evolution to continue, and accept it as now an established feature. Thus in the absence of the agonistic style of local politics that hindered the implementation of the participation agenda in Haringey, Enfield was able to move quite quickly to a form of institutionalised participation around a new set of mutually accepted forums and working practices, as the New Labour model intended.

Box 8.10: Efficient Local Authority Officer Culture

"The current administration has worked well with the voluntary and community sector: they listen to us. They recognise we can offer added value." ET2

"Council officers are committed to involving the community and voluntary sector from the chief executive down, because they realise we are a source of knowledge, which makes their job easier." ET4

"Interesting opportunities are opening up with individual departments and the officers, which need good relationships with the voluntary sector in order to deliver." ET6

"The chief executive of Enfield is excellent, he is well into it and appreciates the sector and has turned it around a bit and made councillors realise that you have got to treat the voluntary sector representatives as equals. They know better now. Previously, they did not know the voluntary sector at all." ET1

"The people who make decisions: the leader and the deputy leader have a clear understanding about what the VCS are about, and the fact that we have a cabinet member responsible for the VCS shows the commitment to the sector in Enfield." ET2

"I think, invariably, everyone has accepted that the voluntary sector in Enfield has a voice. I do see the political culture distinctive to Enfield and I bragged about it when I went to the Haringey Community Empowerment Network meeting." ET5

In sum, there are explicit contrasts between Haringey and Enfield. Participation through CENs/LSP's appears to have worked more effectively in Enfield. In Enfield the CEN appears to have established a secure role for itself, where established VCOs are influential in the new system, and their professional management structures have enabled them to co-operate effectively with key council players at officer level. VCO enthusiasm appears to have translated into an effective structure and outcomes in Enfield. Reinforcing the contrast is one recent development in Haringey. The recommendation for the "default" of HarCEN was from the Council, but ratified by a HSP sub group (HarCEN had a choice of whether their case was heard by a council voluntary sector team or by the HSP). HarCEN's case was further hindered by the board splitting and the recent elections being contested (remember HarCEN is a limited company). The Council decided to recognise current directors rather than take a view about the elections. In fact two separate submissions were made on behalf of HarCEN. The HSP tried to get a collective response, but when this failed they listened to two submissions: a rather telling indicator of continuing rivalry in the sector. One observer was very negative about HarCEN, saying effectively it was "writing it's own death note".

At present Haringey Council are working with HAVCO and 'Community Development' support to establish a new model for the delivery of CEN in Haringey. In the mean time there will be less community representation on the HSP, which will be more council driven. The likelihood is that the CEN role will go to HAVCO, a favoured organisation of

the Council's. However, it is not at all sure to community representatives how HAVCO would respond, as they already have their own 'Community Links' website, a database network of Haringey based VCOs. In all this, what is most clear is that the implementation of the community participation agenda continues to be moulded by local conditions and circumstances.

I conclude with the observation that the local political culture has important consequences for the implementation of the VCO participation agenda. The nature of local politics affects which/how VCOs are brought into the consultative system and which are excluded. Confrontational politics dominated local authority debates in Haringey, whilst participatory officer/VCO debates dominated Enfield, which seem to be parallel discourses: this is not an outcome of the setting up of CENs, but reflects the environment into which they were introduced.

8.8 Relating Community Participation to Models of Power

Besides interpreting the experience of the participation agenda in relation to local political cultures, we can relate it to the models of political power discussed in Chapter 2. What do the findings about participation in Haringey and Enfield tell us about how power is exercised in this area of local policy making in contemporary Britain, and is a "shift in power" (towards the community) at all apparent? The first point is to modify the basic conceptual diagram of Chapter 2 to emphasise the importance of "local conditions" (Figure 8.2). The models of power based solely on Foucauldian notions assume power has "spatiality", whilst Weberian notions assume power is played out in space. These both have their limits as they neglect the significance, of "local conditions," at the neighbourhood level, such as local political subcultures, and local socio-economic conditions can play in the conceptualisation of how power is exercised, factors which are recognised within "urban regime theory" approaches (but in terms of city politics rather than neighbourhood politics). Having established this modification, it can be applied to illustrate the cases of Enfield and Haringey, characterising the "local conditions" of these places in terms of their dominant (but not exclusive characteristics) of agonistic and bureaucratic respectively. Note that these characterisations do not exhaust any possible set of "local political cultures" but are to best represent the cases under study here.

The political culture of Enfield and Haringey is summarised in Figures 8.3 and 8.4 tying in the conceptual framework devised in Chapter 2 in order to highlight the theoretical importance of this issue. These may appear to over interpret the processes at work and the theoretical connections that can be made in terms of power and phases of governance, but there is a theoretical/ conceptual "pattern" there all the same, that is worthy of a closer examination. Essentially, Figure 8.3 characterises Enfield's political culture as comprising of a Weberian approach to power that is bureaucratic or local authority managerial in type. This has created some scope for movement towards a model of "local governance," within which a VCS sector conforms and establishes a coalition around bureaucratic/ formal structures, to exercise what they recognise is a limited influence, but within which they can learn to optimise their roles. In contrast, Figure 8.4 illustrates that power is diffused between different key players in Haringey, where power is exercised in ways that are more conflictual, manipulative and provocative in style. Unrest between VCOs and public sector agencies concerning the nature of the decision making process and VCOs input or participation within it (i.e. the two- dimensional view of power) has led to attempts being made by VCOs to strive for and move further away from traditional local government towards a form of local governance which sees them seeking influence outside of the formal participation structures initially set up, partly out of frustration with the failure of these structures to convince of their value. This could indeed perhaps be better described as an agonistic form of politics, here shown to co-exist with this particular model of power. It is interesting to note that the New Labour "Communitarian" style of politics and policy making, meant to mark a break with "old style" centerist politics, seems to work most effectively (at least with the infrastructure of participation so far devised) within a somewhat conservative, even managerial, bureaucratic local political culture, such as Enfield and least well in a confrontational political arena such as Haringey.

The contrast of "types of power" therefore represents another way to theorise the political transition in Figures 8.3 and 8.4. This demonstrates that it is helpful to appreciate that political power may be exercised very differently at the local level, even in a centralised political system such as in contemporary Britain. There is no single model that describes how power is exercised in all local situations in contemporary Britain. The different models of political power should not be seen as competitive or mutually exclusive, but provide insights into different local conditions (co-existent with

different "local political cultures"), with important implications for how "top-down" policy initiatives might be locally processed and experienced. The Weberian (bureaucratic) and agonistic exercise of political power described here, are two examples of what may in fact be a wider spectrum of co-existing "power- types"/ political cultures in British local politics.

Figure 8.2: Modified Model of Connections with Power and Governance

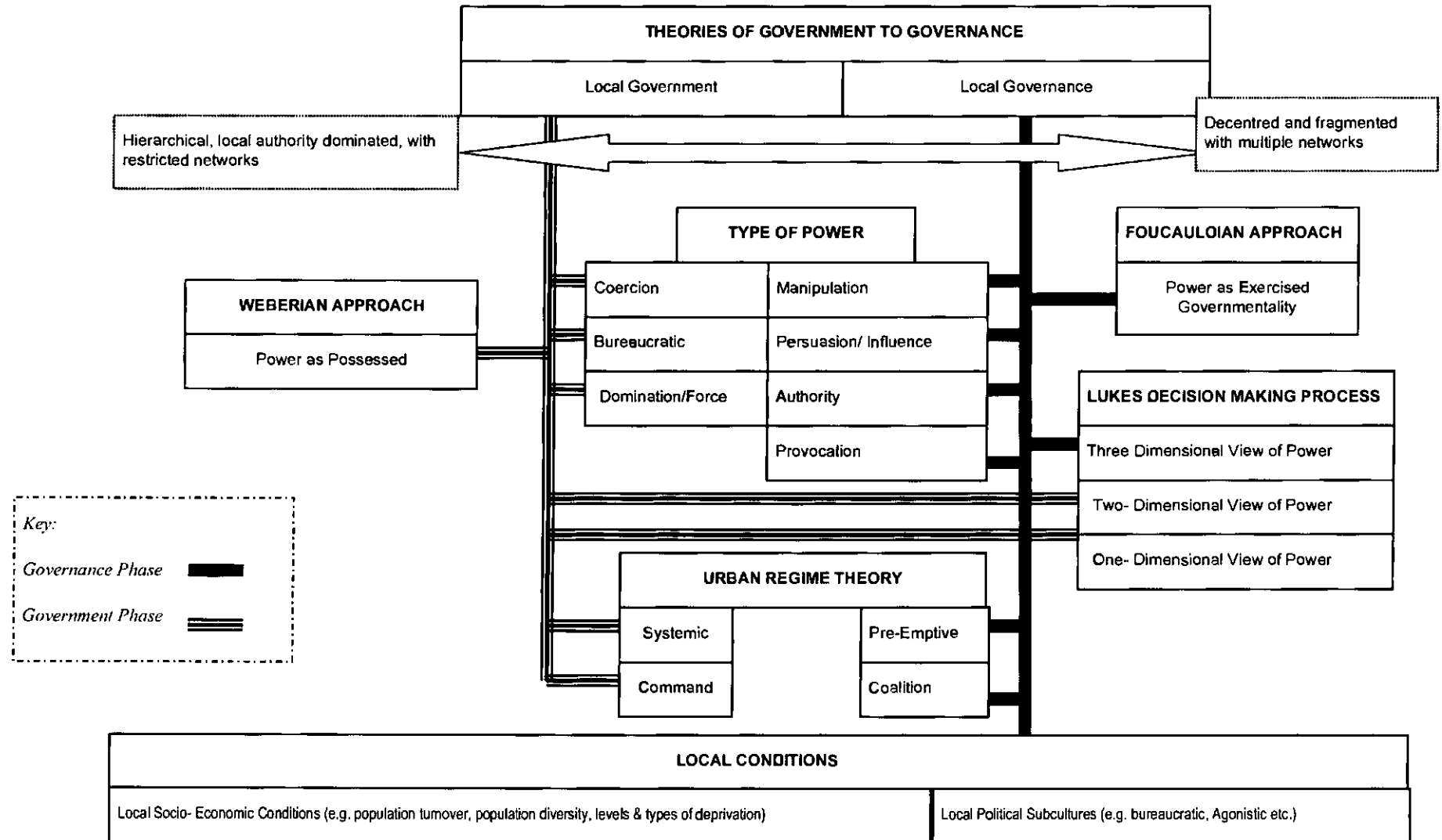


Figure 8.3: The Local Conditions of Enfield and its Connections with Power and Governance

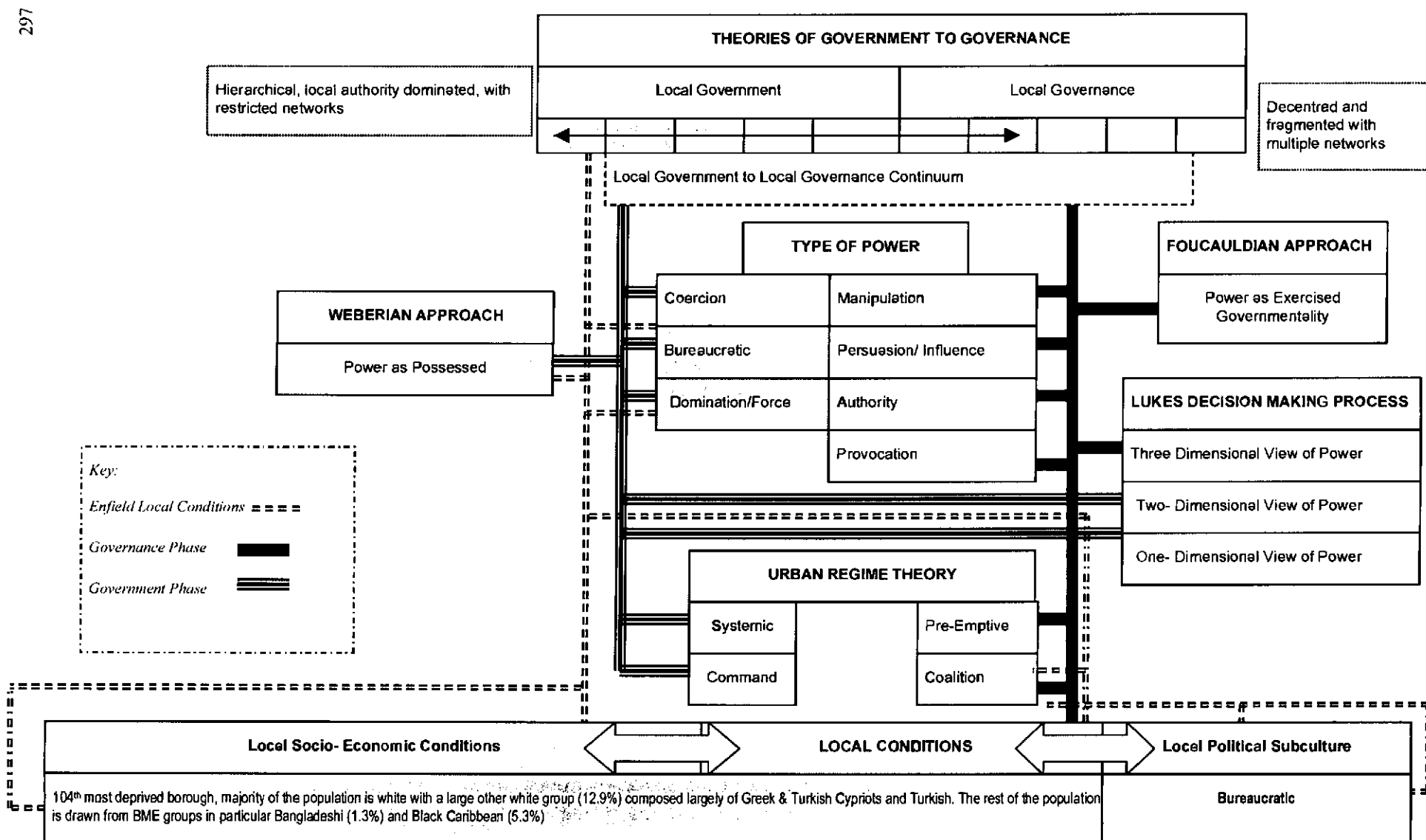
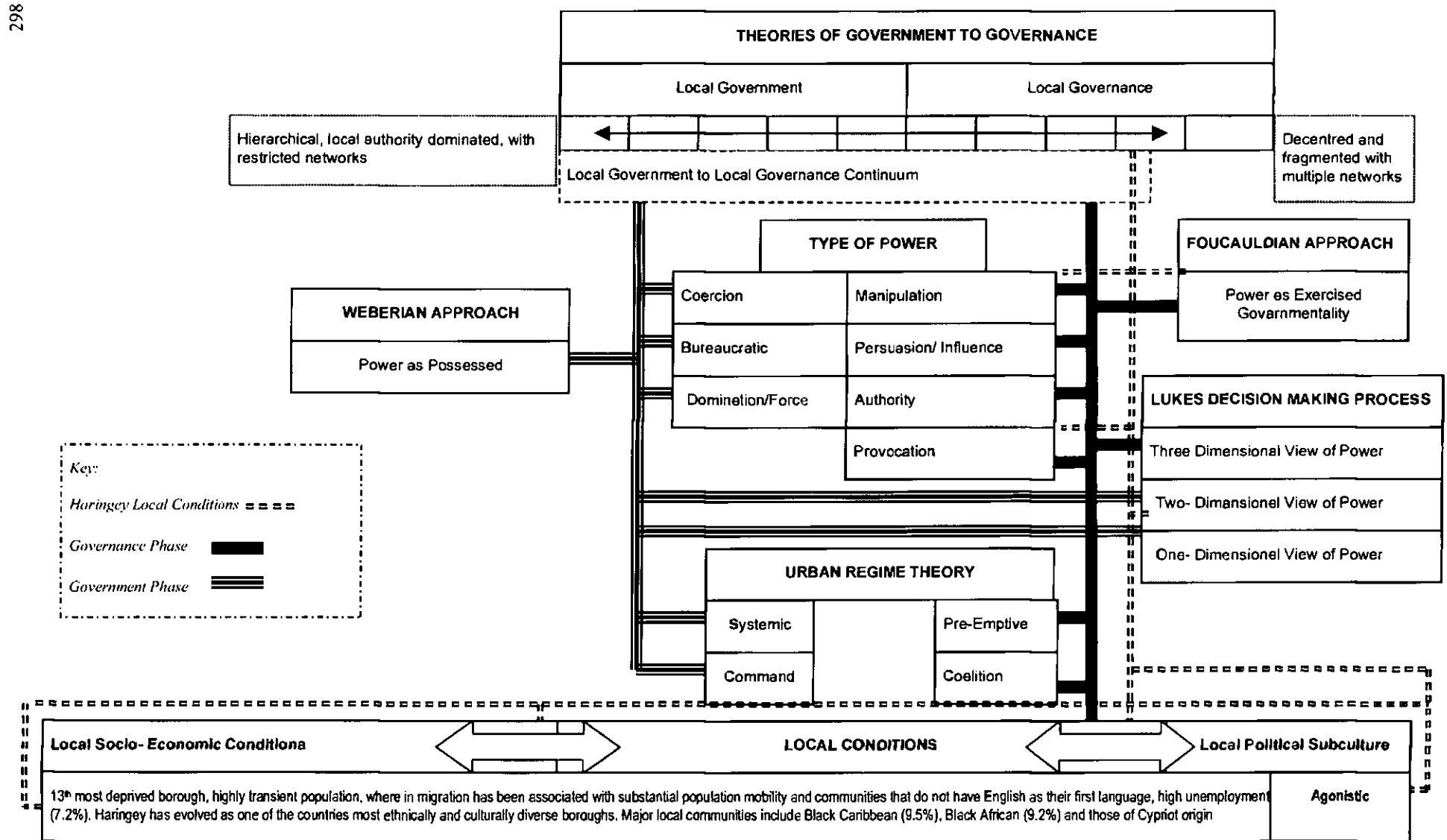


Figure 8.4 The Local Conditions of Haringey and its Connections with Power and Governance



8.9 Implications for Policy

On the basis of this study, some policy recommendations of a fairly specific nature can be made in terms of working in the existing policy paradigm:

8.9.1 Sensitivity to Local Differences

Something that flows from the proceeding analysis is what type of "policy" do you need in a context of agonistic politics? Surely, one key policy implication is that "local" responses need to be genuinely rooted in local conditions and that overlying inappropriate models will be counterproductive. At a broad level, policy makers must not expect a "national policy" to be uniformly implementable, i.e. there must be greater sensitivity of "local political subcultures," histories of conflict and local constraints/ possibilities when implementing national policies. These "local conditions" may make policy hard to implement in some places, whilst such things as bureaucratisation within the VCS and the local authority may make national policies easier to implement in circumstances of shared values, in others. The participation agenda needs to recognise and respond to local conditions when setting infrastructures, participation styles, training systems, delivery mechanisms and evaluation tools. Greater value also needs to be given to VCO activity outside formal structures, which relates back to the critical ideas in Chapter 4 that policy only really focuses upon particular types of third sector/ engagement activity, but ignores much that is "vital" and important to peoples everyday life.

8.9.2 Internal Resources: Building Unity and Co-operation within the VCS Sector for Effective Participation

VCO representatives also made several suggestions that are especially appropriate for the early stage of the participation process, to overcome perceived lack of experience, competence, management skills and capacity in the VCO sector. These include building greater unity and co-operation, providing state subsidies to VCO representatives, and consortium building amongst small VCOs. This clearly indicates a shift beyond the need for training of individuals or individual organisations to a stage of finding resources from within the sector itself, rather than being only "given" them by local authorities.

The risks for the voluntary sector are now more long-term and concern the voluntary sector not being able to survive in a decentralised form and with its traditional values intact in an environment of “institutionalised participation” and VCO service delivery. Respondents have the same solution, which is to form consortiums with local partners or establish a one stop building where the majority of VCOs are housed, in order to improve opportunities to access commissioning activities, ensure that it does not become a process that becomes self-selecting, as well as aiding unity and clarity (see Box 8.11). Incubator units or hot-desking for new and emerging VCOs, so they can set up new projects with low-cost premises, is also offered as a solution. It is felt amongst the participants that service delivery contracts will push people to work in consortiums because unless people get together, they are never going to get on the rung. By entering into consortiums it is thought it would make community groups more visible in the community, as they would be recognised as something “tangible,” as a respondent pointed out *“it is no good giving a contract to a VCO that nobody knows where it is, statutory agencies will not be prepared to say, “oh you know, it's that little organisation in the port-a-cabin behind the police station that we are commissioning.” (HT5).* It is felt by participants that CENs should put together consortiums on “themes” because opportunities for focused co-operation need to be identified and facilitated.

Box 8.11: The Role of Consortiums

“Those organisations that are found to be struggling in this environment need to look at merging or forming a consortium with other similar organisations, which will help the weak organisations to perform and for organisations to identify their strengths.” ET1

“Smaller groups need to be looking to forming into consortiums - that is the only way forward for them.” ET10

“I feel that some of us just haven't got the experience for this and I think we need to group ourselves into a consortium, e.g. we could enter into a consortium which offered inclusive after-school activities.” HT9

“VCOs have to enter into consortiums, in order to play the commissioning game, because otherwise they will not be noticed. VCOs need to be told if they don't form consortiums, they won't even be recognised, never mind being commissioned.” HT5

“We need to work with small groups and encouraged the formation of partnerships and consortiums among themselves, so that they can have the capacity to be involved in the delivery of services. If it is not done there is a high chance that many small VCOs will be unfunded and will close.” HT6

It is thought that by entering into “themed consortiums” competent individuals from within the “collective” could be responsible for bidding for service level contracts, because to run a service and get all the funds is too much for individual community groups. Haringey VCOs, generally accept they need to do this, but are all waiting for “someone” to lead the process. As one respondent commented: *“We really need*

somebody who is not rushed off their feet to put it together as a consortium.” (HT9). This indicates the new culture is likely to lead to VCO consolidation around bigger players, even in locations where suspicion of formalised participation remains.

Beside the perceived need for thematic co-operation, a conclusion from the research is that VCOs also need to be more unified in their “voice,” particularly at the strategic level, so as to exert greater authority. VCOs themselves recognise unifying the sector into one voice as a route to more influence, (especially in terms of articulating their points at meetings). But there is a real tension between VCOs wanting to retain flexibility and individuality and operating as part of consortia (see Box 8.12).

Box 8.12: Unity and Cooperation

“We are not there to be on the opposite side, all of the time, we are there to engage in discussing and we need to be seen as an equal partner in the partnership, but equal partners is something we earn, rather than it being given to us and we need to demonstrate to others we are equal, and we are in fact, contributing.” HT5

8.9.3 External Resources: Training and State Subsidy to VCO Representatives via Allowances/Expenses

Some VCOs call for state subsidy to VCO representatives in the participation process, e.g. via allowances and expenses, as they believe the government needs to do what it does with the councillors, give somebody that holds public office within an organisation reasonable compensation. Participants would also include paid officers in the voluntary sector to this as well, in order for these individuals to have “slots of time” allocated to them to carry out their representative work (see Box 8.13).

Box 8.13: State Subsidy to Increase VCS Participation

“Councillors get allowances and that is what they are going to have to do in the VCS.” ET9

Participants would also like specific training in key areas such as public speaking, getting points across precisely and concisely, negotiation, and reflection workshops on the style of presenting one's self as a representative, along with training for leading roles (e.g. Chairs).

8.10 New Questions raised by the Research/ Future Directions for Research

Current development of governance arrangements appear set to put more power back with the local authority, raising the question: Is the principle of VCO involvement (and CEN and related structures) robust enough to stay effective in this new regime? The 'Review of sub national economic development and regeneration' published by the HM Treasury (2007) which sets out a basis for giving local authorities a stronger role and developing the role of RDAs and sub- regional agreements. It notably says very little (if anything) about the role of the VCS. Therefore a future area for study will be to monitor how the role of the VCO sector will develop and adapt as the wider structures of governance and policy making evolve. The current participation agenda has raised expectations of a permanent role among (parts) of the VCS in urban/regeneration policy, indeed it has embedded them in some important policy making/delivery structures, so some future role is to be expected. A research approach that emphasises looking at policy as a process, via reflecting on the on-going experience and judgements of principal actors overtime as the policy evolves (such as used in this thesis), would appear to have potential in analysing the developing role of the VCS.

In terms of more direct potential for future enquiry there are five main research areas arising from the thesis that could be explored.

The thesis results demonstrated that the relationship between local authorities and the VCS varies significantly. What are the implications of a greater local authority lead role, particularly for localities where relations with the VCS are poor? Will such a context lead to local authorities either bypassing the sector, or working selectively with what they see as 'reliable' VCS partners? This could also be related to the wider issue of the existence of different local political subcultures in relation local authority - VCS relations.

The new agenda for contracting out provision (in key areas such as employment and training) suggests that the VCS sector might be marginalised in relation to large private sector providers, and larger VCOs will be better able to respond to the new context. More research is needed in to how such changes will affect the VCS more generally, and smaller VCOs in particular. This is particularly important given that all the major

parties say that they see a key role for the VCS in developing and delivering social provision in the future. In this context, an understanding of whether policy directions will enhance or reduce VCS capacity become important.

The thesis has also shown that different levels of engagement exist within different VCO groups. In particular, different levels of engagement have been identified with regards to disability and inclusion and ethnicity, diversity, inter- faith and BME type groups. This variety of engagement would benefit from further investigation. One could further investigate political and practical reasons and theoretical explanations for this “participation bias,” and suggest methods for overcoming it, and means of establishing more broadly based and on-going participation.

Local political subcultures, their distinguishing features and their influence on participation are of particular interest, after emerging as a key finding as the thesis developed. Are other “types” of political subculture apparent that significantly impact on forms of participation, and how do these co-exist with models of power (the way power is exercised at local levels?). The idea of the local political subculture as an explanatory variable for the degree, style and effectiveness of local VCO participation in the policy process is important, but developing this analysis would also require further consideration of the factors that may themselves, determine this local subculture.

Finally, further developments of “typologies of engagement” (such as were presented in Chapter 7) are of substantial interest in so far that policy seems to imply that all VCOs wish to be “actively” engaged in the same way. It was with this in mind that it was possible to recognise a more complex reality with the identification of four different types of VCO participants: leaders, learners, limited engagers and alternative strategizers/ self- excluders (see Table 7.3). It would be of particular interest to explore how these “types of engagement” can be characterised, and linked to specific VCO groups and to political subcultures/ local conditions.

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APPENDIX A

SCOPING STUDY INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

	DATE
BARNET	
Barnet Voluntary Services Council Chief Executive	29/11/03-Telephone
Community Partnerships Manager	19/01/04
Democratic Services Barnet Area Forums Manager	19/02/04 -Telephone
ENFIELD	
Employment Development Manager	25/11/03
Policy Team Strategic Services Unit: Citizen's Panel	25/11/03
Enfield Community Empowerment Network Co-ordinator	06/12/04
HARINGEY	
Haringey LSP Manager	07/11/03-Telephone
Head of Policy and Regeneration	14/11/03
North London Partnership Consortium Director	20/11/03
Noel Park Neighbourhood Manager	10/12/03
Joining Up Northumberland Park SRB 6 Manager	21/10/04-Telephone
Haringey Neighbourhood Assemblies Manager	15/11/04
Head of Neighbourhood Management	15/11/04
Akronym Consultancy	28/01/05 - Telephone
WALTHAM FOREST	
Head of Regeneration	29/10/03 - Telephone
LSP Committee Manager	18/10/04
Waltham Forest Voluntary Action Community Empowerment Network Co-ordinator	12/10/04
SUB REGIONAL/ LONDON WIDE	
London Voluntary Services Training Council	13/11/03 – Telephone
London Voluntary Services Council	01/11/04

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION EVENTS ATTENDED

Table 1: Enfield Events Attended

ENFIELD EVENTS		
Participant Observation Event	Date of Event	Duration
ECEN Annual Meeting	19/10/04	3 hours
ECEN Members Meeting	29/11/04	2.5 hours
ECEN Representatives Meeting	29/11/04	30 minutes
ECEN Members Meeting	18/01/05	2.5 hours
Building Bridges: Interactive Workshop to Develop Partnership Working Skills	22/02/05	3 hours
ECEN Members Meeting	01/03/05	2.5 hours
ECEN Representatives Meeting	01/03/05	30 minutes
ECEN Members Meeting	12/04/05	2.5 hours
ECEN Members Meeting	24/05/05	2.5 hours
ECEN Members Meeting	12/07/05	3 hours
"Feeding Back to our Communities" Support Programme	21/07/05	4 hours
"Negotiation Skills"	19/09/05	5.5 hours
ECEN Members Meeting	19/09/06	2.5 hours
Total	13 events	34.5 hours

Table 2: Haringey Events Attended

HARINGEY EVENTS		
Participant Observation Event	Date of Event	Duration
Effective Representation I -III	03/11/04 - 05/11/04	15 hours
Haringey Faith Consultative Forum Launch	22/11/04	2 hours
London Community Participation Network Launch	22/11/04	3 hours
Effective Representation II -III	20/01/05 - 21/01/05	10 hours
Haringey Strategic Partnership Meeting	03/02/05	2 hours
Race Relations Amendment Act Session for Local Voluntary Organisations and Local Communities of Interest	08/02/05	6 hours
Haringey Consultative Faith Forum	16/02/05	2.5 hours
HarCEN Members Meeting	16/02/05	2 hours
Haringey Refugee and Asylum Seekers Action Group Meeting	17/02/05	2 hours
Haringey Carers Consultative Forum	09/03/05	2.5 hours
HarCEN Members Meeting	16/03/05	2 hours
Effective Representation I	21/03/05	4 hours
Haringey Refugee and Asylum Seekers Action Group Meeting	14/04/05	2 hours
Haringey Consultative Faith Forum	18/05/05	2.5 hours
HarCEN Members Meeting	25/05/05	2 hours
HarCEN Members Meeting	20/07/05	2 hours
"Disability Discrimination Act Training"	29/07/05	4.5 hours
"Stronger Representative Voice" training	13/09/05 and 15/09/05	6 hours
Autumn Conference	28/09/05	6 hours
HarCEN Members Meeting	19/10/05	2 hours
HarCEN Members Meeting	16/11/05	2 hours
AGM	14/12/05	6 hours
EGM	20/03/06	6 hours
HarCEN Members Meeting	12/07/06	2 hours
Haringey Consultative Faith Forum	19/07/06	2.5 hours
LAA VCO Round Table Meeting	28/07/06	4 hours
Total	28 events	104.5 hours

Table 3: Sub Regional Events Attended

SUB REGIONAL EVENTS		
Participant Observation Event	Date of Event	Duration
North London Strategic Partnership Conference	14/01/04	6 hours
Total	1 event	6 hours

APPENDIX C**THE COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT NETWORK QUESTIONNAIRE****COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT NETWORK QUESTIONNAIRE****INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE**

You are invited to take part in a research study. Please take your time to read the following information carefully. The aim of the questionnaire is to get your views on the operation of the Community Empowerment Network.

There are three sections to the questionnaire for completion. Please read the instructions for each section of the questionnaire carefully. Please make sure that you answer all questions/ statements. All responses will be treated in the strictest confidence.

The Community Empowerment Network in your borough has endorsed this questionnaire and the results will provide them with some valuable data to improve the effectiveness of their working. The data will also be used for my PhD research.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part you may withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your views are greatly valued and your participation is much appreciated. If you have any questions about this research please do not hesitate to contact –

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COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT NETWORK QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION 1: ABOUT YOU/ YOUR ORGANISATION

1. Name of Organisation	
--------------------------------	--

2. Type of organisation (Please tick those that apply)

Charity	Incorporated	Unincorporated	Other (please state)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

3. Do you consider your organisation to be a:

Voluntary Organisation	Social Enterprise	Community Business	Friendly Society	Partnership/ Consortium	Other (please state)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

4. How long has your organisation been in existence?

Less than 1 year	1-5 years	5-10 years	Over 10 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Number of people on your management committee/ board of trustees:

6. Number of employees? Full Time

Part Time

7. Number of:	Volunteers	Members	Clients
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

8. In which boroughs do you provide services?

LB Barnet	LB Enfield	LB Haringey	LB Waltham Forest
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify) _____

9. Is your organisation in receipt of grant funding?

Been Funded in past, but not now	Currently Funded	Not Funded
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. If currently receiving grant funding or have received grant funding in the past please name your two principal funders:
1.
2.

11. What was your grant funding during the last accounting year?	
---	--

12. What is the main target group for your organisation? (You may indicate up to three in order, 1, 2 and 3 of importance)

Anti Racism		Health	
Arts and Music		Housing and homelessness	
BME Communities		Refugee and Asylum seekers	
Crime Prevention/ Ex-offenders		Single Parents	
Children and Young People		Substance Abusers	
Disabilities		Unemployment	
Education		Women	
Elderly			
Employment and training		Other (please specify)	
Environment			
Faith			
Families under stress			

13. What is the principal activity/ sector for your organisation? (You may indicate up to three in order, 1, 2 and 3 of importance)

Education	
Counseling	
Advice/ Advocacy	
Training	
Employment	
Enterprise	
Outreach	
Other (please specify)	

SECTION 2: THE COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

	Yes	No
14. Is your organisation a member of the Community Empowerment Network (CEN) in your borough?		
15. Are you an elected CEN Representative?		
16. Were you briefed about your role as a CEN Representative?		

	Yes	No
17. Are you mandated by your group as a Representative (i.e. does your group inform you on how to vote on certain issues at the CEN meetings)?		
18. Do you have the authority to make decisions as a CEN Representative?		

19. How has your organisation benefited from its involvement in the activities and services provided by the CEN? (Tick where applicable)

Our members have received training	
We have a better understanding of how we can influence service delivery	
We have a better understanding of how we can influence local decisions	
We have been able to access resources to make our organisation more effective	
We have been able to access resources to support local activity	
We have been able to participate in local partnerships	
It has provided networking opportunities	
We have received NRF/ CEF funds for projects	
Other (please specify)	

20. What other services would you like to see the CEN provide?

--

	Yes	No
21. Are you aware of any voluntary and community sector organisations that have chosen not to be involved in the CEN?		
22. If yes, please name the organisations that are not involved in the CEN:		

23. In your opinion which of the following factors do you think has contributed to organisations not wanting to be involved in the CEN?

Lack of knowledge	
Perception that nothing changes	
Poor experiences of participation in the past	
Domination of meetings by certain individuals or groups	
Other (please specify)	

26. What is your most important role within the Local Strategic Partnership with respect to the following? (You may indicate up to three in order, 1, 2 and 3 of importance)

Project management	
Information dissemination	
Monitoring, scrutiny and evaluation	
Funding and budgetary decisions	
Policy making	
Strategic planning	
Other (please specify)	

27. Has the Local Strategic Partnership been successful in doing the following?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree		Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Targeting local needs more effectively					
Building better relationships with community organisations					
Building better relationships with the voluntary sector					

28. Within the Local Strategic Partnership have the following issues been significant?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree		Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Different working styles across the sectors					
Conflicting interests and agendas					
Perceived dominance of the local authority					
Lack of co-operation between different community groups					
Lack of commitment from some of the sectors					
Other issues of conflict					
Other (please specify)					

29. Within the Local Strategic Partnership how effective have the following strategies been in promoting effective working?					
	Very Ineffective	Ineffective		Effective	Very Effective
	1	2	3	4	5
Consensus Protocol in decision making (e.g. the Local Compact)					
Developing partnership protocol					
Declaring conflicts of interest					
Subjecting Local Strategic Partnership to scrutiny					
Established accountability to peers & wider community					
Other (please specify)					

30. How best would you describe the leadership to support community participation in your local area? Please tick one only	
No leadership	
Token leadership	
Committed but marginalised leadership	
Committed and effective leadership	

31. In your opinion, how would you rate the following elements of community participation?					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree		Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Community participation is people's right					
Community participation overcomes alienation and exclusion					
Community participation makes communities stronger in themselves					
Community participation maximises the effectiveness of services and resources					
Community participation helps join up the different conditions of development					
Community participation helps sustainability					

32. Based upon your experiences of working with the Community Empowerment Network and Local Strategic Partnership, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree		Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
CEN reflects the views of the community					
CEN has so far had a limited influence over local decision making					
CEN should promote its role more clearly to local partners and the community					
CEN is having some success in influencing the decisions of public service providers					
Timing problems compromised the CEN's credibility and damaged their trust in the Local Strategic Partnership					
CEN has too little influence on the main boards of the Local Strategic Partnership					
Holding public events in deprived neighbourhoods raises community involvement					
CEN members are not satisfied with their influence on the Local Strategic Partnership					
CEN should make its processes more transparent (e.g. decisions on rejected grant applications and how representatives are chosen)					
Community and public sector members of the Local Strategic Partnership have to manage tensions over trust and power					
Members of the CEN think their representatives have too little influence on the Local Strategic Partnership					
Funding the voluntary sector builds the confidence of community groups					
CEN can do more to enhance its influence on the Local Strategic Partnership					

Final Comments

	Yes	No
Would you like to receive feedback on the results of this questionnaire?		
Would you be willing to participate in a further stage of the research?		
If yes to either of these questions, please put your name and contact details below:		
Name		
Address of organisation		
Telephone		
Email		

APPENDIX D

**PMF EXERCISE IN HARINGEY:
PROBING EARLY EXPERIENCES WITH THE CEN/LSP STRUCTURES**

Probes	Responses
Communication and Information	
Does the CEN have up to date information about the voluntary and community sector especially activity in deprived neighbourhoods?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearer information needed - outreach work required • Need to map youth provision • Better contact with residents associations is required • Calendar of meetings/ events is a good idea
Is appropriate information effectively distributed to the voluntary and community sector and local groups about the CEN, its role and the opportunities for involvement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, via mailing system of HarCEN and its website • Expand mail outs - get partners to mail out too • No tenant based groups - these need adding • Minutes of meeting should be available on the HarCEN website
Is effective communication ensured within the CEN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not really - no one is ever in the office • Not fully • Need to serve community needs better • Communication two way process - organisations need to inform HarCEN of other events • Greater clarity is required on the roles and responsibilities of the organisations delivering services on behalf of HarCEN
Organisational Capacity and Learning	
How has the CEN developed its organisational structure and processes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisational structure of HarCEN largely mirrors the statutory sector/ LSP structure, possibly in order to enable HarCEN to respond quicker to their demands.
What opportunities are provided for CEN members to develop skills and knowledge to participate and engage with the network and potentially the LSP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BME organisations would take up training and capacity building if they were supported with expenses and staff to cover their jobs to enable attendance • Focus on underlying problems e.g. drug use • Effective representation courses and Race Relation Amendment Act courses tailor made for specific interest groups provides opportunities to broaden knowledge and the skill base of the sector as a whole and in particular HarCEN representatives.
How is the CEN relating to the LSP including individual partners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives on HSP • HarCEN Forums feed into the corresponding thematic partnerships of the LSP via individual representatives • HarCEN's structure mirrors the HSP, which can only help build the relationship between the two.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More work is required on identifying what voluntary sector partners can deliver in partnership
Inclusivity	
Is there a strategic action plan to encourage wider ranging involvement from the voluntary and community sector and is it implemented consistently?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan needed to be clear about rules of engagement. • The Hard to reach must be identified and encouraged to participate • More must be done • First I have heard of this - Is there a published strategic action plan to encourage wider involvement? And more importantly if there is how is it being implemented? • Is there an outreach strategy?
How far is the diversity of the community reflected within the CEN and those acting/ speaking on its behalf?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to work with community groups that work weekends • It is perhaps the best we could hope for - reflects the community in so far that BME, women and white European individuals are present on the board of the HSP
What resources are available to help neighbourhood based and other community groups e.g. those based around identity or special interests take part in the CEN?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Chest and Community Learning Chest funding • CEF and NRF
Representation and Accountability	
How are representatives selected from across a range of groups in the voluntary and community sector?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HarCEN has a fairly wide range of CVO groups, therefore through an election process run by the Electoral Reform Service- HarCEN members vote for representatives that they want to serve on the HSP from their membership base or in some cases they are co-opted into their position
How are people being trained and empowered to play an active role in the CEN'S leadership to act on its behalf?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post training support to enable us to keep up and maintain enthusiasm is required • Coaching and peer mentoring helps • Existing representatives should mentor the new representatives that come on board for a short period until they are up to speed • The effective representation course etc should be made compulsory for representatives or those wishing to stand as representatives.
How are representatives briefed and supported to feed into the LSP and back to the CEN and the wider community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings/ forums and through HarCEN representatives on the HSP • Availability of decisions made at these meetings should be made more widely available. E.g. minutes of meeting should be put on the HarCEN website • Do representatives complete a report sheet for each thematic partnership meeting they attend, which documents the action needed? These could

	<p>be circulated at HarCEN Members' meetings, and posted on the website for Members to offer suggestions etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A discussion board would aid this process
The LSP Context	
Are there a sufficiently influential level and range of voluntary and community sector representation on the LSP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not usually the case with BME representatives. The few that get through generally tend to lack the skills to operate at that level • Possibly the range of representation e.g. BME, faith and local resident associations are all present on the LSP which are key groups GOL identified that must be represented at this level. I would question the influence these groups currently have because over the last year many decisions had already been made before HarCEN's was in operation and being at the strategic level is new to CVOs so the influence they have will take time to develop.
Are effective inductions, training and information provided for all voluntary and community sector representatives on the LSP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training provided for CVOs is appropriate and effective in building the knowledge base • Building Bridges training could be introduced as in Enfield. This is joint training which looks at the relationship between statutory bodies and CVOs and the work of the Local Compact
Do LSP decision-making processes include voluntary and community sector representatives in a way that allows them to contribute and have a real influence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives are at the table for the first time, but they do not always feel that they are involved in the decision making process - more work is required here • Greater level of support systems need to be in place pre and post meetings
Are LSP partners supporting CEN work at the neighbourhood level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital and prison visits • Support services • Consultation at the grassroots needed • Attendance at forums would suggest so.
HarCEN's Influence and Impact	
Has the CEN affected the ability of the local community to organise/ operate effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perhaps made more organisations aware - but probably too early to tell.
Is the CEN helping the LSP to have a positive effect in deprived neighbourhoods?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is attempting to reach out to groups that have not been included or felt involved in local activities before, which can only be positive • Need to identify indicators to measure the effectiveness of this community participation
Is the CEN contributing effectively to the LSP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CENs existence and activities are critical to the development, representation and growth of marginalised groups.

APPENDIX E

SOCIAL- ECONOMIC DATA OF THE CASE STUDY AREAS

Table 1: Ethnic Group and Country of Birth

Ethnic Group	Haringey (%)	Enfield (%)
All People	216,507	273,559
British	45.3	61.2
Irish	4.3	3.1
Other White	16.1	12.9
Mixed		
White and Black Caribbean	1.5	0.9
White and Black African	0.7	0.4
White and Asian	1.1	0.8
Other Mixed	1.3	0.8
Asian		
Indian	2.9	4.0
Pakistani	1.0	0.6
Bangladeshi	1.4	1.3
Other Asian	1.6	1.9
Black or Black British		
Caribbean	9.5	5.3
African	9.2	4.3
Other Black	1.4	0.8
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group		
Chinese	1.1	0.7
Other Ethnic Group	2.0	1.0
Country of Birth		
England	59.5	72.9
Scotland	1.6	1.0
Wales	1.1	0.7
Northern Ireland	0.7	0.4
Republic of Ireland	2.7	2.0
Other EU Countries	3.8	2.3
Elsewhere	30.5	20.8

Source: 2001 Census Key Statistics <http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>

Table 2: Migration

Migration	Haringey	Enfield
All People	216,507	273,559
Who are migrants	36,336	31,606
Who moved into the area from the UK	17,670	12,810
Who moved into the area From outside of the UK	3,544	2,017
With no usual address one year before Census	4,328	2,921
Who moved into the area From outside of the UK	10,794	13,858
Who moved into the area from outside of the UK	20,397	14,808
All people in ethnic groups other than White	74,425	62,610
Who are migrants	10,820	9,872
Who moved into the area from the UK	3,873	3,995
Who moved into the area from outside of the UK	1,140	996
With no usual address one year before Census	1,711	1,134
Who moved within the area	4,096	3,747
Who moved out of the area	5,549	3,431

Source: 2001 Census Key Statistics <http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>

Table 3: Economic Activity

Economic Activity	Haringey (%)	Enfield (%)
All People Aged 16-74	162,700	197,706
Economically Active		
Part Time Employed	7.6	9.7
Full Time Employed	39.5	40.3
Self employed	9.0	9.0
Unemployed	5.8	4.1
Full Time Student	3.5	3.0
Economically Inactive		
Retired	8.1	11.2
Student	8.2	6.4
Looking after home/ family	7.2	7.4
Permanently sick/ disabled	5.2	4.6
Economically inactive other	5.8	4.4
Unemployed		
Aged 16-24	19.2	20.6
Aged 50 and over	14.1	18.2
Who have never worked	17.6	12.6
Long term unemployed	32.5	33.1

Source: 2001 Census Key Statistics <http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>

